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Kittitornkool, Jawanit

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ELEPHANTS STANDING ON THEIR HIND LEGS : WOMEN IN THE CHANGING VILLAGE CONTEXT OF SOUTHERN THAILAND

submitted by Jawanit Kittitornkool

for the degree of PhD

of the University of Bath

2000

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the impacts of environmental, social and economic changes, as a consequence of the development process, on women in different social groups; and the ways in which women have responded to the changes in a village in Southern Thailand. The implementation of development policy at the national level, including the promotion of high-yielding rubber, the educational system, and financial loans have differentially affected households in accordance with their prevailing resources. Due to environmental and economic changes, the major material resource in most households has changed from rice fields to rubber plots. The maintenance and accumulation of household resources have been dependent upon the levels of their investments in human resources and modernised means of production, as well as market demand and close connections with city. The domination of the state in village life is increasingly evident. Social differentiation in the village has been reinforced by the interplay of the state and the market.

Women's development activities are mainly based on gender ideologies of women's housework responsibilities and femininity. The extent to which they benefit from development involvement varies with their prevalent resources. Close connections with the authorities bring new categories of social and cultural resources to the women and their households. The gender ideologies and women's social identities as a mother have been reproduced through social mechanisms and in the development process, as well as have mediated and perpetuated intra-household gender relations.

In spite of changes in household resource profiles, women's long-standing involvement in household production and reproduction work has not been significantly transformed. Women's toleration of their husbands' behaviour is based on the social and economic necessity of having husbands' provision and protection, as well as gender ideologies. The extent of women's power in their households varies with their resources and position in the familial hierarchy. The traditional pattern of the wife's management of family money does not indicate women's control over family money in poor families.

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Finally, as a Buddhist, I would like to pay my ultimate respect to the three Jewels of Buddhism, the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, which have always enlightened my path.

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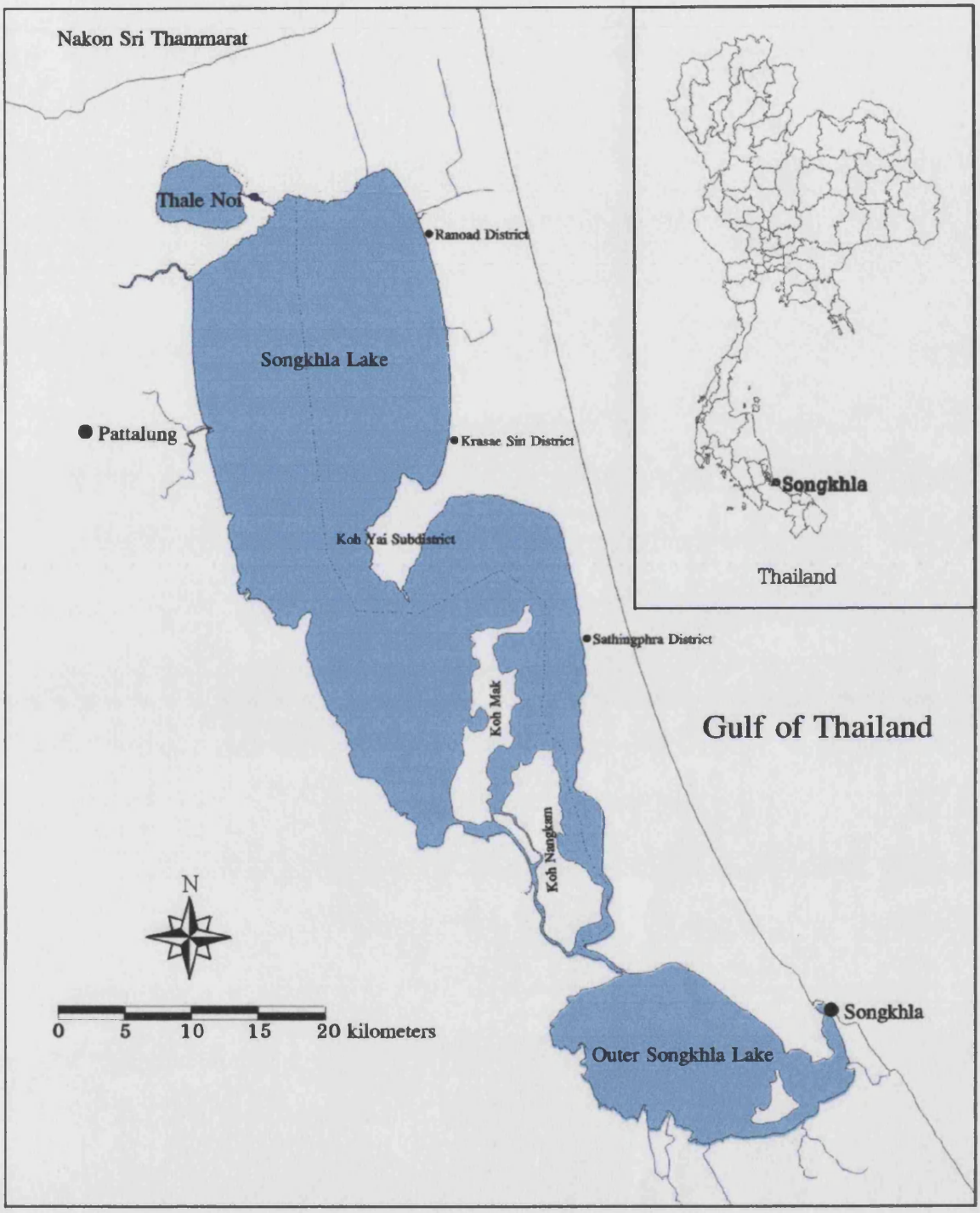

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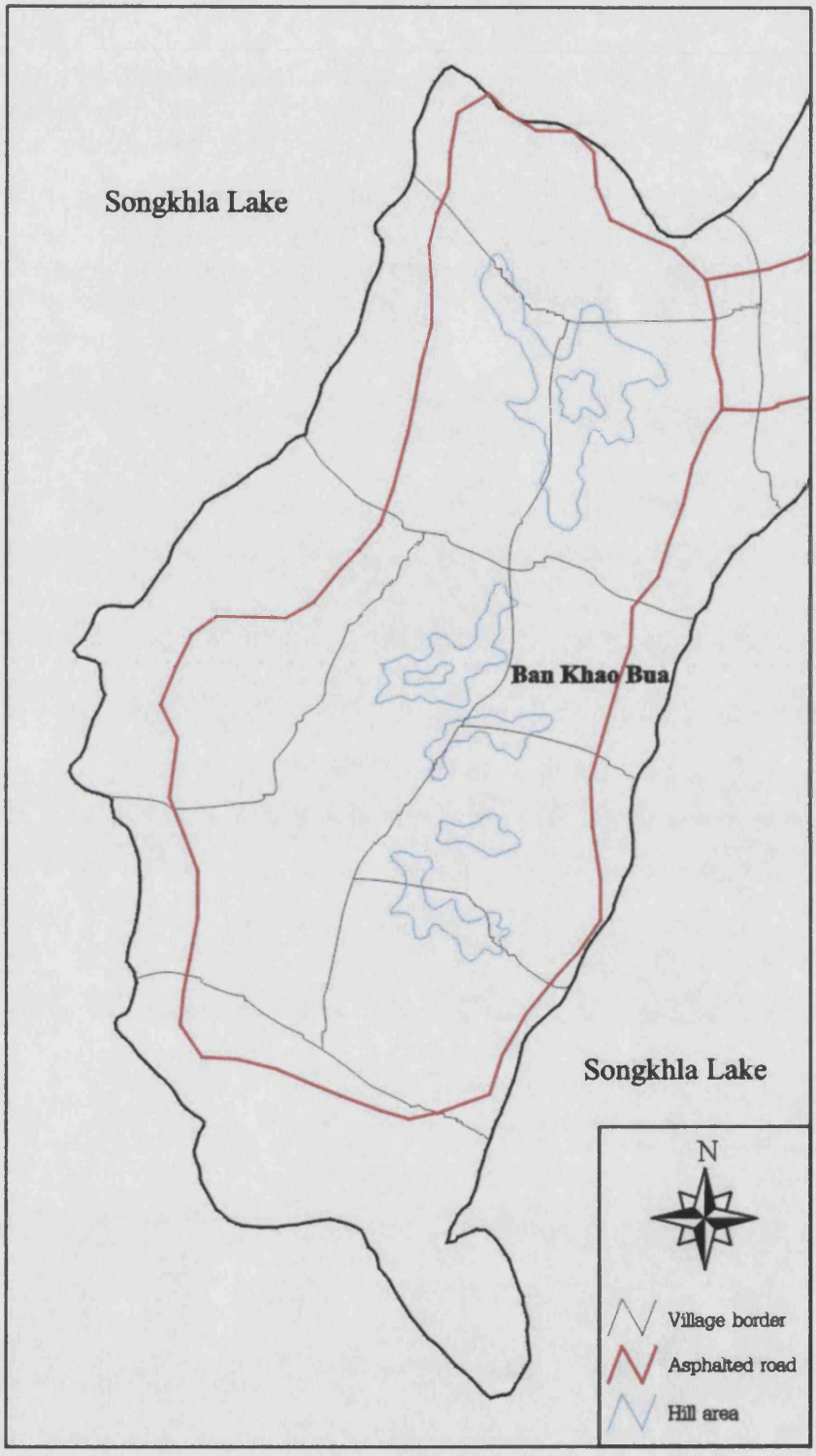

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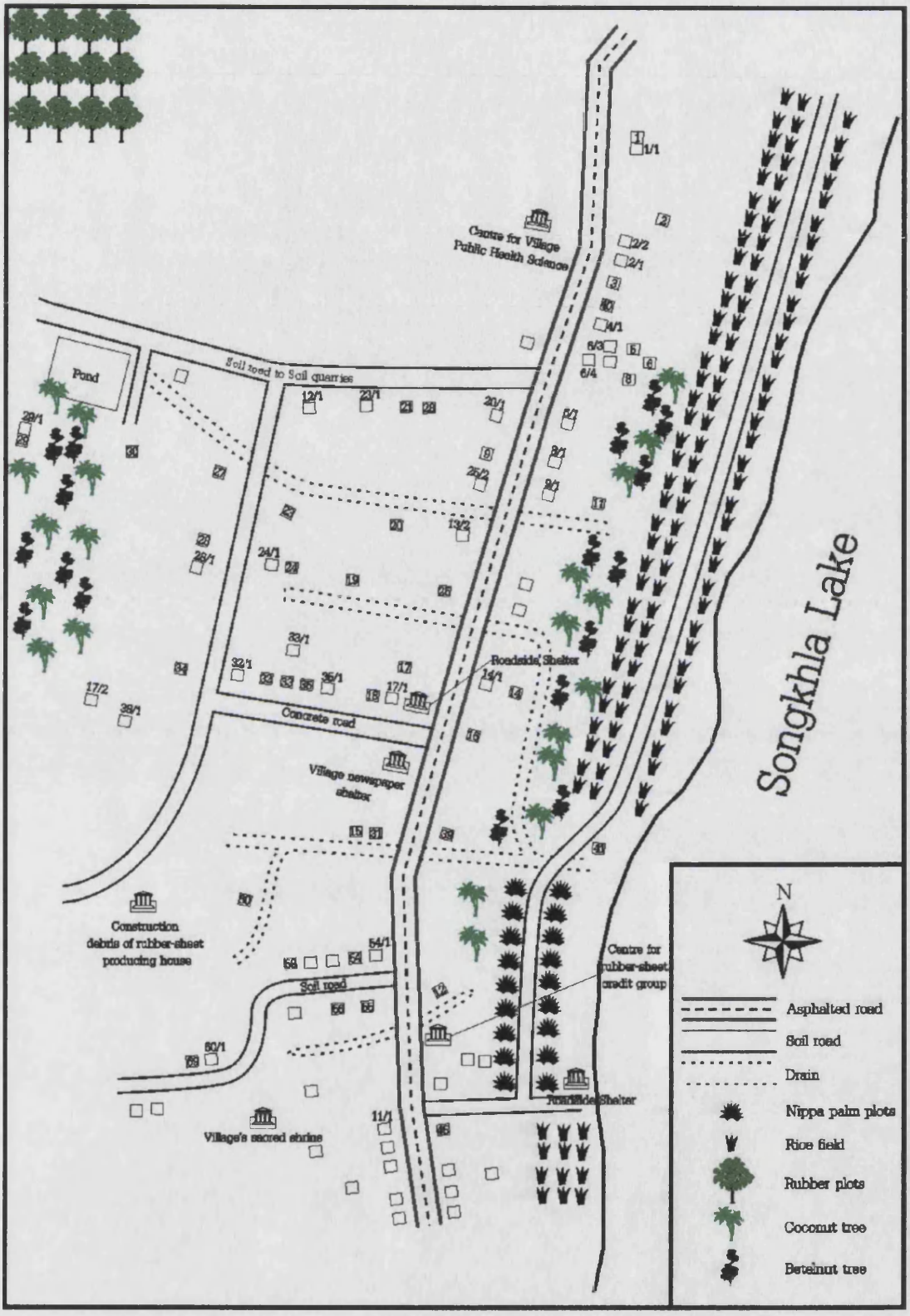

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

During the last twenty years there has been an increasing number of studies on gender issues and the impacts of modernisation and implementation of development policy on Thai women. However, none has specifically focused on the extent to which environmental, social and economic changes have affected intra-household gender relations and women's involvement in village development activities. This thesis takes an ethnographic approach to investigating the effects of environmental, social and economic changes, arising from the development process, on the position of women in the household and the community in a Southern Thai village.

The traditional perception of Thai women as "the hind legs of the elephant" led by their husbands, who are the front legs or family leaders, has persisted throughout the centuries. This thesis explores and explains the position of women within the dynamics of their household resource profiles and the village context. Gender ideologies of women's housework responsibilities and women's social identities as a mother remain of significance and have been reproduced by social mechanisms. It is argued that in spite of significant environmental, social and economic changes, intra-household gender relations, including sexual division of labour, power relations and allocation of household resources, have not been significantly transformed.

Gender ideologies have also been the underlying factor contributing to the predominance of women' s roles in production and reproduction tasks, as well as in managing family money. Women's toleration of their husbands' behaviour has been related to gender ideologies and the social and economic necessity of having a man's provision and protection for their families. Reflecting the significance of women's contribution to their families, this thesis argues that it is indeed the "hind legs of the elephant" that the livelihoods and well-being of village households have primarily relied upon.

This chapter gives the background to the study and its objectives, as well as an analytical framework. It argues that a comprehensive understanding of how the development process has dynamically and differentially affected the position of women in a changing village context can be derived from a conceptual framework comprising two units of analysis, household and individual woman. The analysis requires a conceptual balance of different but complementary perspectives on women's subjectivity and autonomy, as well as on structural factors wrought by the interplay of the state, the market and the community.

1. 1. Background

According to Reynolds (1994), the literature on gender relations in Thai Studies is minimal. It is only during the last twenty years that academics have turned their attention to the issue of the impacts of development implementation on Thai women. Sittirak (1998) concludes from her review of studies on different groups of Thai women, particularly factory women and prostitutes, that during the last three decades the concept and practice of development have had different meanings for and effects on them. A collection of papers presented in Theme V : "Women, Gender Relations and Development in Thai society" of the Sixth International Conference on Thai studies, which was held in Chiangmai, 14-17th of October, 1996 (cf. Somsawasdi and Theobald, 1997), highlights the impacts of economic growth on Thai women with case studies at the macro and micro levels. Whereas the number of case studies of Thai women and development for Central, Northern and Northeastern regions has increased, studies on Thai women in the south remain minimal. However, to my knowledge, none of the studies on Thai women focused on the relationship between the impacts of the development process and intra-household gender relations in a village context. This study is one of the first attempts in Thai Studies to shed light on the extent to which environmental, social and economic changes wrought by the development process have been dynamically and differentially related to the position of women in the household and the village in a Southern rural community.

Recently the position of Thai women has been summarised thus, "Most women work. A few manage. Almost none govern" (Phongpaichit and Baker, 1996 : 114). In spite of high levels of health, education, employment and income, Thai women are still under-represented in national politics and in the shaping of public policies (Thomson and Bhongsvej, 1995). According to Bell (1997), the pattern of development in Thailand has depended upon class and gender bias. Based on its foundation of capitalist patriarchy, Thailand's "economic miracle" has been according to some result of the exploitation of women. However, traditional perception of Thai women as "the hind legs of the elephant" led by their husbands, who are the front legs, has persisted throughout the centuries, and are reflected in contemporary Thai literature (Kepner, 1996), as well as in the views of one of Thailand's most powerful businesswomen who became Thailand's first female minister (Williams, 1998 : 115). A reinterpretation of this metaphor is possible, however, Podhisita (1998) argues that Thai women have been the actual "driving forces" of the families and Thai society due to their predominant contribution to both production and reproduction work. This interpretation fits well with the observations of many Thai development workers as well as with the growing school of Thai feminists.

Van Esterik (1995) notes that in the post-colonial period, Thailand, as well as Singapore and Malaysia, have undergone rapid economic development, and women have not always benefited from modernisation and development. Whereas the benefits to some women in privileged social groups in the new modern sector were apparent, many other women were harmed by changes in working conditions caused by development. Moreover, increased promotion of Women in Development (WID) programmes also provided Third World women, the beneficiaries of women's projects or training programmes, with additional workloads. Consequently, it is necessary to compare the gains and losses of different groups of women in the development process (Van Esterik, 1995).

In the last four decades Thailand has witnessed drastic changes in social, economic and environmental dimensions following the increase in its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from Baht 64.4 billion in 1960 to Baht 2,509.4 billion in 1991 (Rabibhadana, 1993). The

impacts of the development process affected different social groups in Thai society in different ways. On the one hand, it is undeniable that the most basic social indicators, particularly rates of infant mortality, child malnutrition, and life expectancy, had shown up to that point, improvements as a result of development policy (Phongpaichit and Baker, 1995; Siamwalla 1997a). On the other hand, the economic growth has not "trickled down" to everyone and everywhere to an equal extent. A great number of people, especially those in villages and small towns of the country' s periphery have been left behind, and even marginalised (Parnwell and Arghiros, 1996 : 1). The gap between urban and rural income widened from 2.5 times in 1981 to 4 times in 1992. Equally, the national social and economic development plans have not contributed to decreasing the income gap between rural and urban areas. Due to falling crop prices during the 1980s, rural families had to earn extra income from off-farm sources. In 1990 one in five rural families (almost one in three in the poorer northeast) earned an average monthly remittance of one thousand Baht (£ 16.7) from their family members working in the city (Phongpaichit and Baker, 1996). It is estimated that by the early 1990s over 40 percent of rural population continued to live below the poverty line (Bello et al., 1998).

The Southern region includes the fourteen provinces of Thailand which stretches southward to the Malaysian border (Centre for Southern Development, 1995). In spite of its highest average regional rainfall, the region is not a major rice-production area due to its unsuitable soils and topography. Sixty-five per cent of the Southern population relies on rubber cultivation for their main income. In addition to rubber planting, horticultural crops, fisheries, popular tourist locations, and mineral deposits are major sources of income for the population (Parnwell and Arghiros, 1996 : 5). Three Western coastal provinces in the Andaman Sea, including Phuket, Phang-nga, and Krabi, as well as Samui Island in the Gulf of Thailand, are popular tourist attractions due to their geographical features. Meanwhile, a number of border districts of the Eastern coastal provinces, including Hat Yai in Songkhla province, attract Malaysian and Singaporean tourists for goods and commercial sexual services (Centre for Southern Development, 1995).

There is a common misapprehension that most Southern people are Muslims. In fact, most Southerners are Buddhists, and there are also significant numbers of descendants of Chinese-Confucian migrants who have been assimilated into Thai culture, as well as a small number of minority tribes on the Andaman coast (Phongphaiboon, 1992). Meanwhile, 25% of Southerners are ethnically Malay and practice the Islamic religion. Most of the Muslim population is concentrated in the four southernmost provinces, Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Satun (Centre for Southern Development, 1995). Due to the close links between ethnicity and religion, being a Muslim is equivalent with being a Malay. In spite of being officially the citizens of Thailand, the Malay-Muslims speak the local Malay dialect, except those in Satun. The conflicts between the Thai government and the Malay-Muslims are based on both political and cultural grounds, as well as religious difference (Smith, 1994: 25). The long history of the dialectic central control versus Southern Muslim autonomy began in the fourteenth century, and the control of Bangkok was only finally realised by the close of the nineteenth century. However, a series of twentieth century separatist and irredentist movements in the far south have remained evident (London, 1980: 104). A greater tolerance of religious pluralism, together with a growing awareness by the Thai government as to the particular needs of the Malay-Muslims, has also been apparent in a variety of policies (Smith, 1994).

Similar to other regions in Thailand, the Southern region has experienced drastic social, economic and environmental changes during the last three decades. The imposition of Thailand's nation-wide logging ban in 1989 was the result of the death of hundreds of villagers in Southern villages caused by disastrous flash floods, which were related to massive deforestation in the area (Sponsel and Natadecha-Sponsel, 1995 : 31). The decreases of the catches in marine fisheries are the consequences of overfishing and modernised fishing technologies (Nathawee, 1993). Mangrove forests have been significantly depleted due to the expansions of shrimp farming (Centre for Southern Development, 1995). Such ecological changes have adversely affected the livelihoods of small-scale fishing households (Kittitornkool, 1996). Equally, during the 1960s - 1990s the Organisation of Rubber Replanting Aid Fund (ORRAF) promoted the replanting of indigenous rubber with high-yielding species, and rubber export has been one of the most significant sources of national revenue.

Since 1995 when the decentralisation policy was initially implemented, 2,780 of the total 7,205 Subdistrict Councils in Thailand, including 93 subdistricts *[Tambon]* in the south, have been upgraded into Subdistrict Administrative Organisations *[Aw baw taw]* (Centre for Southern Information, 1996).

Songkhla is the second most populated province and one of the most important provinces in the south. Since the 1990s it has been developed into one of the regional centres, next to Bangkok, where industrial plants are located and which have increased the off-farm growth income for rural people (Simon, 1996: 102). The provincial and Hat Yai districts are the centres for export-oriented industrial settlements, as well as international tourism and services, linking with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in accordance with the Asian Free Trade Areas (AFTA) and the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) plans. It has the largest rubber planting area. Since 1994 the Central Rubber Market has been set up in Hat Yai to be the regional centre for rubber transactions (Centre for Southern Development, 1995).

In brief, the last thirty years have witnessed significant changes in social, economic, political and environmental conditions of the Southern region and these have had significant impacts on people's ways of life. A great number of young women earn their living and support their families by working as cheap labour in rubber and frozen food industries in Songkhla area. Meanwhile, thousands of women from different regions have been drawn to tourist locations, as well as to Hat Yai and other border districts, to work in the service or commercial sex industry.

This study explores the extent to which Southern rural women have related to the impacts of modernisation and the implementation of development policies, focusing on a Buddhist village of Ban Khao Bua approximately 100 kilometre from the provincial and Hat Yai districts (Map 1).

1. 2. Framework

In order to illuminate the position of women in a changing village context, this study investigates the impacts of changes on women in different social groups, and the strategies with which the women have responded to such changes. The study focuses on the interplay of environmental, social and economic changes, and its impacts on women in all social groups in a village in the Songkhla Lake Basin area in Southern Thailand during the last three decades, the most significant period of transformation in Thai society.

Formally stated, the objectives of the study were :
(1) to investigate the impacts of environmental, social and economic changes, as consequences of the interplay of the state, the market and the community, on women in different social groups; and
(2) to analyse the ways in which women in different social groups have responded to the changes.

In order to achieve these two objectives, the analytical framework used incorporates the following elements :

(1) the external factors impacting on households : the social, economic and environmental consequences of the interplay of state and market at the village level; and
(2) the extent to which the internal factors of households in different social groups have responded to the external factors. Such internal factors include:

(2.1) household resource profiles : natural resource base, material, human, social and cultural resources, in different social groups;

(2.2) gender ideologies : women's social identities, and

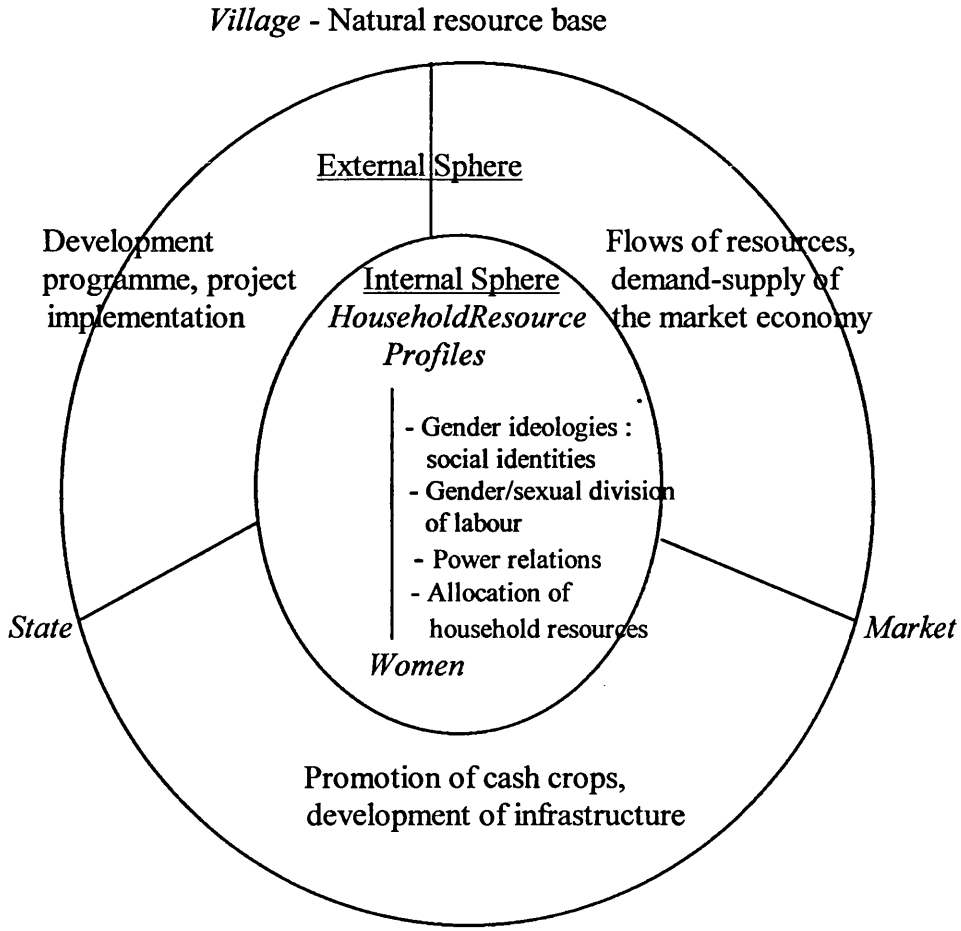
(2.3) three aspects of intra-household gender relations:

i. gender/sexual division of labour,

ii. power relations in the households, and

iii. allocation of household resources.

Figure 1.1 Analytical Framework (Adjusted from Heady et al., 1995 :10)



The conceptual framework employed in the study is adjusted from the analytical framework of the research project "Poverty and Sustainability in the Management of Inland Capture Fisheries in South and Southeast Asia" undertaken by a research team from the Centre for Development Studies at the University of Bath during 1992 - 1994 (Heady et al., 1995).

The framework illustrated in Figure 1.1 above comprises two units of analysis, the household and the individual woman. Initially, the investigation focuses on the external factors, which are the natural resource base and the interplay of the state and the market at the village level, including flows of resources, demand-supply of the market economy, promotion of cash crops, development of infrastructure, as well as implementation of development programmes and projects. The study explores the

extent to which the external factors have affected the household resource profiles (Lewis and McGregor, 1993). Subsequently, the analysis concentrates on the dynamic relationship between the external factors, together with changes in the household resource profiles, and gender ideologies, as well as the three aspects of intra-household gender relations, sexual/gender division of labour, power relations and the allocation of household resources.

This study is mainly based on two pieces of fieldwork conducted in a Southern Thai village during December 1996 - February 1997 and September 1997 - August 1998, focusing on 23 household case-studies selected from the outcomes of a village household census and wealth ranking. The research methods also included participant observations and interviews to explore the external and internal factors concerning household dynamics and women's life stories. In addition, interviews with officials and academics, as well as literature reviews, were incorporated to obtain data concerning the external factors and issues of gender relations.

This study uses a Household Resource Profile Approach to understanding household dynamics. The approach sees households as having a profile of resources which they use to achieve livelihood outcomes. The household resource profile includes material resources - flows of income and stores of value; human resources - age, gender, educational status, condition of health; social resources - households' relationships in the market, community and with the state; cultural resources - the accumulation of status via cultural means; and natural resources - water, land and so forth which are the resource bases of the households (Lewis and McGregor, 1993).

From the feminist viewpoint, the household is a logical starting point for an analysis of social relations due to its central role in enabling, constraining and differentiating its members' participation in the economy and society (Kabeer, 1994). As we will discuss later, however, the view of the "household" should not serve to obscure the analysis of women within the household. Approaches to the analysis of intra-household gender relations must complement the household focus. In the external arena, the community, the market and the state are of significance in determining the livelihoods and well-being of households. In addition to the natural resource base, village households are also

located in the context of the interplay of the state and market. Household livelihoods and well-being are closely associated with the implementation of development programmes and projects; the dynamics of the market economy; and the promotion of cash crops as well as development of infrastructure in their community. Consequently, the analysis focuses on the extent to which the survival and advancement of households are related to these external factors.

As has been noted, Thai households cannot be considered simply as undifferentiated units because access to and control over household resources, as well as consumption vary according to gender and age. Pongsapich (1997: 15) concludes that due to traditional systems of bilateralism with a matrilateral bias, the dominance of men in Thai society has not been as great as elsewhere, but aspects of patriarchy are still apparent. According to Heyzer (1986: 16), a full understanding of the unequal position of Southeast Asian women can be derived from an explanation of cultural and ideological factors. Consequently, in order to unravel the dynamics of the position of women in various social groups, the conceptual framework used incorporates gender ideologies, particularly women's social identities, as well as three interrelated components of intra-household gender relations, including gender/sexual division of labour, power relations and allocation of household resources. An elaboration of this aspect of the conceptual framework is presented in Chapter 3.

The study incorporates women's perceptions and interpretations of their own situations, both at the household and community levels. According to Jackson and Pearson (1998: 7), it is crucial that those who claim to be, or to speak for "women of the South" do not misrepresent the diverse positions of different women, and do not simplify the complex multiple social identities of women into a single notion of gender identity. However, a purely subjective account of women's gender interests from the viewpoints of the women themselves is not sufficient for gender analysis, as subjective constructions are not immune from prevailing gender ideologies. The study attempts to produce a conceptual balance between women's subjectivity and the above-mentioned structural factors.

With respect to social analyses, Giddens (1984: 346) states that,

> "...All action occurs in contexts that actor neither helped to bring into being nor has any significant control over. Such enabling and constraining features of contexts of action include both material and social phenomena.."

The study is based on two different but complementary analytical perspectives. Undeniably, the state exercises power in the form of influence (if not control) over people by setting norms and enacting laws to which people must conform, and it also provides sanctions that people will be punished if they do not (Johnston, 1996). The degree of freedom which peripheral institutions of the state enjoy varies considerably, which significantly influences the extent of implementation of central policies (Ham and Hill, 1993; Masae, 1996).

However, according to the actor-oriented perspective, the relationships between state and society should not be collapsed into a single form of explanation. As state policy is not free of elements of social construction, the results of state intervention in rural development in Third World contexts are socially negotiated (Arce, et al., 1994). The extent to which large-scale and remote social forces can alter the life-chances and behaviour of individuals is determined through shaping, either directly or indirectly, the everyday life experiences and perceptions of the individuals concerned. The approach is of significance in explaining the differential responsesof particular social actors to similar structural circumstances, as social actors are not considered disembodied social categories, but active participants, who process information and strategise in their dealings with other actors (Long and Van der Ploeg, 1994).

In brief, this ethnographic study is one of the first endeavours in Thai Studies to associate the above-mentioned conceptual framework and theoretical stances with an investigation of the social, economic and environmental changes in a village context, which have impacted on the position of women in the household and the community.

1. 3. Chapter Outline

Chapter Two: Thai Women in the Development Process

This chapters gives an overview of development policy and implementation in Thailand during the last four decades. It illustrates the impacts of growth-oriented policy implementation on different groups of Thai people. Brief historical descriptions of the status of Thai women, their social relations and cultural constructs, as well as women's development policy, are incorporated, together with their participation in and contribution to different social domains.

Chapter Three : Conceptual Framework of the Position of Women in the Dynamics of Households

This chapter elaborates the conceptual framework to be used for the analysis of the dynamics of households and the position of women in the households and the community in chapters 6 and 7. Notions and arguments concerning the "high status" of Southeast Asian women are incorporated. The Household Resource Profile Approach and particular conceptual tools, including gender ideologies, gender/sexual division of labour, power relations and allocation of household resources, are derived from reviews of the literature on perspectives on household dynamics and the relationship between changes and the position of women in Third World societies.

Chapter Four : Methodology

The methods used for the development of ethnography, including village selection, selection of case-studies, fieldwork process, and the writing-up are described in this chapter. It also delineates a number of methodological issues and complications as a consequence of socially- and culturally-constructed limitations. The extent to which the writing-up process is related to interpretations and self-reflections is also discussed.

Chapter Five : The Village and the Women

This chapter comprises complementary illustrations of Ban Khao Bua and women case-studies. The first part describes an overview of the village in terms of its features, history, population, as well as social, economic and environmental changes caused by

the penetration of the state and the market. The extent to which daily village lives and organisations, as well as politics are related to the development process is discussed. In addition to women's perceptions of changes in the village, brief accounts of twenty-three women case-studies are incorporated.

Chapter Six : The Dynamics of Household Resource Profiles and Women's Involvement in the Changing Context

This chapter discusses the extent to which external factors, namely environmental and economic changes, the implementation of development policies, and closer connections between the village and the market have affected the dynamics of household resource profiles in four social groups. Social differentiation has been reinforced by the development process. Subsequently, the chapter elaborates the relationship between women's involvement in development project implementation and village politics and the resources women have at their disposal. A number of circumstances are presented to highlight the issues of women's resource ownership.

Chapter Seven : The Position of Women in the Changing Household Context

The extent to which social and economic changes have impacted the position of women in their households is elaborated in this chapter. Gender ideologies, particularly women's social identities as dutiful daughters and nurturing mothers, have not only been reproduced through different levels of social institutions, but have also mediated intra-household gender relations. In spite of the changing context, women's responsibilities for both production and reproduction work have remained significant to their households' livelihoods. Regardless of matrilocality, women's ownership of inherited land and their high levels of input into households' well-being, women's power vis-à-vis their husbands remains limited, particularly in poor households. The traditional pattern of the wife's management of family money does not necessarily translate into women's power. In addition to gender ideologies, the social and economic necessity of having the husband's provision and protection for their families underlies women's toleration of their husbands' behaviour.

Chapter Eight : Conclusion

This chapter summarises the research findings and implications. The extent to which the research findings relate to feminist concepts is discussed. A number of issues are also related to women's development policy, as they correspond with the experiences and recommendations of feminist academics and activists.

CHAPTER TWO

THAI WOMEN IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

This chapter aims to elaborate different dimensions of the position of Thai women as a consequence of the interplay of cultural, social and economic changes during the last four decades of the implementation of the national development plans. As an analysis of the position of women cannot be separated from their social context, the first part of the chapter gives an overview of the development process in Thailand and its impacts on Thai society. Thereafter, the rest of the chapter illustrates issues concerning Thai women, ranging from their predominant status and images, social and economic factors determining their conditions, institutions concerning women's development, and women's involvement in the dynamic contexts. The extent to which the situations of Southern Thai women are included in different sections varies with the availability of limited information. A fact file of Thailand and gender issues is given in Appendix I.

2. 1. Background of the Development Process in Thailand

This section elaborates the historical background of the development process in Thailand, in particular during the last five decades.

During the last two centuries, Thailand has been influenced by the economic and political forces dominant across the region and the world (Muscat, 1994; Phongpaichit and Baker, 1995). In the nineteenth century, it was incorporated into colonial trade. The 1932 revolution, which abolished the absolute monarchy, involved the state directly in the process of capital formation by initiating state capitalism in Siam (Rajchagool, 1994 : 173). The original name of Siam was changed to "Thailand" in 1941, as "..a

political act of a chauvinist regime to promote the domination of the ethnic Thais and their culture over others..." (Winichakul, 1994 : 18).

During the cold war period in the 1940s, Siam became a locale for the political rivalry of the Great Powers. Thereafter, since the 1950s Thailand has been influenced by international economic forces, such as the spread of multinationals, the expansion of Japan, the relocation of manufacturing, and the globalisation of capital. However, forces in the local economy and society have played a significant role in mediating these external influences in Thailand (Phongpaichit and Baker, 1995; Parnwell and Arghiros, 1996).

At the start of the nineteenth century, like all its Southeast Asian counterparts, Siam encountered the West, though it was the only country in the region that avoided colonialism. Muscat (1994 : 18 - 19) summarises key elements of economic and modernisation policies in the first half of the 1900s as follows : promotion of production for export based on natural resources; reform of manpower institutions for rice production labour; tax incentives for land settlement and production; the investments of the public sector in irrigation, communications, and rail transit; encouragement of private business and banking, as well as investments in irrigation canals north of Bangkok; promotion of Chinese immigrant labour; strengthening of public administration; and establishing a framework of fiscal and monetary conservatism for the implementation of the afore-mentioned policies.

Subsequently, within about one decade of the implementation of development plans in 1961, Thailand was transformed from an agrarian economy exporting crops to an industrial economy exporting manufactures and services (Hewison, 1985; Phongpaichit and Baker, 1995).

2. 1. 1. The formulation and implementation of development plans

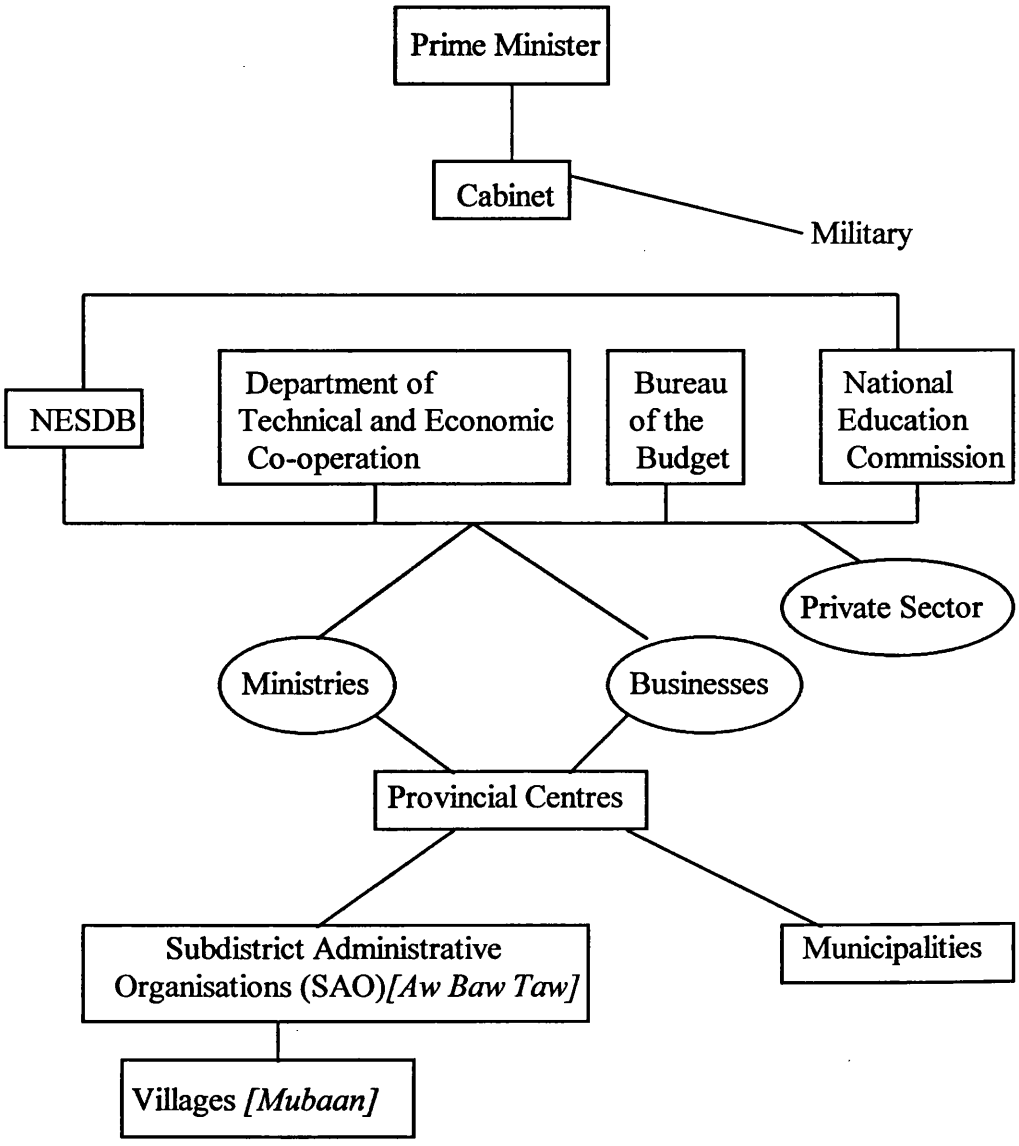
The Thai term for "development" *[Kaanpattana]*, which has emerged since 1957, is predominantly associated with modernisation and economic growth, as well as its twin term *[Kwaam Charoen]*, which means prosperity in the consumeristic sense (Rigg, 1997). Similarly, Bell (1996 : 50) notes that the term "development" is highly ideological, as the development model in Thailand has been influenced by three main influences : American advisors (in the 1960s in particular); American educated Thai technocrats; and the desire of the Thai state to promote a capitalist class. According to Samudavanija (1998), the Thai nation-state constitutes the three dimensions of security, development and democracy, and particular structures have been formed to support such dimensions. Development and democracy have been integrated with the security dimension only during the last four decades. Historically, the security dimension was the primary and major dimension of state legitimacy.

Gohlert (1991) also notes that the motivation behind national development, particularly during the 1960s - 1970s, were fears of communist insurgency in conjunction with ethnic and regional problems Similarly, Turton (1989) indicates that it was in the era of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat from 1958 that a new notion of development was invented to lend political and ideological legitimacy to an authoritarian state and provide material support for the ruling apparatus. With massive reinforcement from the US government as part of the anti-communist strategies in Indochina, the integration of security and development under the Sarit regime without democracy caused a concentration rather than a dispersion of prosperity, an unequal distribution of income, differentiation between urban and rural areas, centralisation, and the abuse of power (Samudavanija, 1998). The issues are discussed in the next sections.

According to Muscat (1994), modern Thai economic development began after 1958, as a coherent set of policies was formulated and pursued with a higher degree of effectiveness. It was the first time the government, influenced by the technocrats, established the pursuit of economic growth as one of its primary objectives. The expansion of technocratic authority is evident from a number of institutions which were

created to rationalise the government's development activities, particularly the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB), the national planning body. The organisation was founded in 1957 to formulate national development plans as guidelines for implementation by various sectoral government agencies. The core of the government's development machinery constitutes four main ministries : Interior, Agriculture, Health and Education, and NESDB, together with the Department of Technical and Economic Co-operation (DTEC) (Gohlert, 1991). The organisational structure of the public administration is as follows :

Figure 2.1 Organisational structure of the public sector in Thailand



Source Adjusted from Schmidt (1996 : 70)

Warr (1993) indicates that the central theme of the development plans has been the provision of infrastructure. Public investment during the first two plans concentrated on roads, irrigation, power and telecommunications, which stimulated private investment and economic growth. The expansion of the road network in the 1960s had a significant impact on agricultural development and overall economic growth. According to Parnwell and Arghiros (1996), the national development plans implemented during the 1960s and 1970s focused on promoting rapid growth in GNP through capital-intensive industrialisation, which produced very uneven growth and increased imbalances both geographically and interpersonally. In the late 1970s, as the Thai government came to realise that the spatial inequities could lead to economic stagnation and political instability in the peripheral areas, a spatial approach was launched to enable larger numbers of people to participate in and benefit from economic growth. Nevertheless, relatively little change in regional distribution of income has been evident.

Although the Fifth Plan signified a shift from the mainstream growth-oriented approach to the equitable distribution of wealth and the recognition of human potentials, the persistent patron-client relations in the bureaucracy and the strong tradition of centralisation have been major obstacles to implementation (Demaine, 1986). Schmidt (1996) also notes that the Seventh Plan (1992-96) differs from previous plans with its main target of the improvement of income distribution. Furthermore, as a consequence of the democratisation movement in the 1990s, the process of drafting the Eighth Plan (1997-2001), which emphasises the development of human resources, incorporated a wide range of social groups across the country on an unprecedented scale. However, due to the independence of the various departments within the Thai bureaucracy, together with duplication and overlapping of their responsibilities, the extent of the NESDB's influence over the agencies in relation to the implementation of the development plans is minimal (Warr, 1993; Parnwell and Arghiros, 1996). Table 2.1 shows the regional differentiation of household monthly income based on the 1997 survey of the National Statistical Office. The 1997 average monthly household income was £ 180 (Centre for Southern Information, 1999 : 44).

Table 2.1 Average household monthly income in different regions

Region	**Average household monthly income (£)**
Bangkok & Metropolitan areas	365
the Central region	181
the Southern region	164
the Northern region	138
the Northeastern region	123

Source : Center for Southern Information (1999 : 44)

It is obvious that households in Bangkok and metropolitan areas earn almost three times those in other regions. Meanwhile, households in the Central and Southern regions are relatively better off than those in the Northern and Northeastern areas.

Although the general situation in Thailand is deconcentration- and delegation-oriented (the central government posts employees at and delegates its powers to the local level), the extent of devolution (central government cedes power to local decision-makers) is still limited (Parnwell and Arghiros, 1996; Masae, 1996; Chareonmuang, 1997). On the one hand, the extent to which any welfare improving implementation will take place still seems minimal, as the macro-economic policy-making and the process of formulating and implementing plans are still under control of technocrats and state managers. As far as sectoral policies are concerned, a renewed focus on democracy, participation or a deliberate state-guided distribution of welfare is obstructed by the interests of business. On the other hand, external events and actors also play a significant role directly and indirectly through various instruments and pressures on policy-making (Schmidt, 1996).

Particular shortcomings in the implementation of the Subdistrict Administrative Organisation (SAO) indicate a wide range of social, political and economic hindrances to initiatives promoting decentralisation and public participation in Thai society. After four years of implementation, it was found that the SAOs failed in their objective to promote greater participation in local development efforts and to facilitate more

efficient service delivery. Drawing from his field studies, Arghiros (1999) concludes that there is a tendency for the state to use SAOs as a means to increase its control over the development activities of local communities. SAO membership has become instrumental in the local economic elite gaining access to development grants. A number of studies also indicate the ambiguities, disparities and contradictions between its objective and implementation reality (Damrong Rajanuparp Institute, 1997; Institute of Technology for Rural Development, 1997; Sophokchai et al., 1997). According to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Interior who concedes the failures of the SAOs, most of the petitions concerning the SAOs are related to corruption in SAO projects (*Krungthep Thurakij Newspaper*, May 31, 1999).

2. 1. 2. Impacts of the development process

After a few decades of the implementation of the development plans, it is noted that "..Thailand is as strikingly an example of uneven development as it is of economic achievement.." (Parnwell, 1996 : 2). The integration of Thailand into the global economic and political system has exacerbated the uneven development. Development has predominantly benefited the urban elite at the expense of the rural majority, the urban poor and the environment (Parnwell, 1996 : 3), as is evident in the following sections.

(a) Improvement of infrastructure and quality of life

Due to the development of infrastructure and allocation of resources for basic education and public health in rural communities, the improvement of quality of life in Thai villages has been evident during the last two decades (Rabibhadana, 1993; Warr, 1993; Muscat, 1994; Phongpaichit and Baker, 1995; Samudavanija, 1998). Siamwalla (1997a) concludes that Thai people have become better off not only in terms of income but also the physical quality of life. The public health-care services in rural areas have improved, and the rate of infant mortality has declined. The 1960s and the 1970s saw the extension of road networks, the 1980s of electricity and the 1990s of household water supply. Since 1975 a formal agricultural credit system has been promoted, and

farmers' previous dependence on informal lenders who charged exploitative interest rates has decreased.

(b) Environmental problems

It is evident that Thailand's economic development has been achieved at the expense of the over-exploitation of its natural resources (Warr, 1993; Parnwell, 1996; Tantiwiramanond and Pandey, 1997; Bello et al., 1998). Thailand's agricultural growth has been the result of the expansion of the cultivated area through deforestation rather than improvements in productivity. Most of the nation's forests were stripped away within three decades of the promotion of agricultural exports (Warr, 1993; Phongpaichit and Baker, 1995; Bello et al., 1998). Major problems of pollution also emerged within a decade of industrialisation. In 1988 a catastrophe of floods which gushed through a Southern Thai village and killed hundreds of villagers, together with increasing political pressure from the environmental movement, forced the authorities to react to the mounting environmental problems (Parnwell and Bryant, 1996). Subsequently, state mechanisms of environmental protection were emphasised in the Seventh Plan (1992-1996). In other words, Thailand has undergone a fundamental shift from land with resource abundance to land and resource scarcity. The need for environmental protection has become an important agenda for the government (Rigg, 1995). Equally, over the last decade some environmental policies have been amended due to collective actions and campaigns of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and grassroots people (Muscat, 1994; Parnwell, 1996).

(c) Social and economic inequalities

Within discussions of Thailand's development, the issue of social and economic inequalities across different geographic and social groups seems to be the most significant topic, evidence of which has been strikingly apparent during the last two decades. Although the average real income doubled during a decade of boom, the gap between rich and poor widened very rapidly. In 1992 the top 10 per cent of households earned thirty-eight times as much as the bottom 10 per cent. Consequently, Thailand has become one of the most unequal societies in the developing world. In addition to rapid economic growth, globalisation also exaggerated the inequality between social

groups with different opportunities and resources (Parnwell and Arghiros, 1996; Bello et al., 1999).

The imbalances in distribution are apparent across different dimensions : income, education, health, and other human service facilities, labour force. The disparities in access to education also contribute to a widening income gap between rural and urban areas in the longer-term, as well as to rural-urban migration. The inequalities between the urban and rural sectors can also be further broken down into regions and subregions, even within the rural economy of the Northeast and some Northern and Southern subregion (Muscat, 1994; Parnwell and Arghiros, 1996). In accordance with a picture of agricultural stagnation and the booming cities, the gap between urban and rural income increased from 2.5 times in 1981 to 4 times in 1992. While many peasants were converted to labourers, over 60 per cent of the population is still left behind in the villages. Due to falling crop prices, income from agriculture dropped throughout the 1980s and rural families had to sustain their livelihoods by earning more away from the farm. By 1990, one in five rural families (almost one in three in the poor Northeast) earned an average of a thousand Baht (£ 16.5) a month from their children or relatives who work in the city (Phongpaichit and Baker, 1995).

(d) Social differentiation in villages

In addition to rural-urban disparities, evidence of intra-rural disparities is also apparent (Turton, 1987; Rabibhadana, 1993; Muscat, 1994; Phongpaichit and Baker, 1995; Phanthasen, 1996; Parnwell and Arghiros, 1996; Samudavanija, 1998; Thanapornpan, 1999). This section summarises aspects of social relations in Thai rural communities by taking into account the notion that, since the high mobility of the Thai population is evident in the flow of people and wealth between regions, the dichotomy between rural and urban is becoming less obvious. Therefore, it is important that the processes of change in the cities and countryside be understood in terms of each other (Rigg, 1996).

According to Hirsch (1991), the village *[Muban]* is manifest first and foremost as an administrative instrument in the hierarchical cellular structure of local administration. Kemp (1991) also notes that the villages have been successfully established as a formal

territorial unit by the modernisation of the administrative system. The state-led rural development programmes are based on the "totalising" discourse of the village as a nucleated and harmonious rural settlement. Such a discourse is contradicted by the reality of cleavages based on kin, faction and unequal access to resources, and has been contested by alternative approaches taken by academics and non-governmental development workers (Hirsch, 1991).

Although the impact of the change induced by the development process is dramatic, it is uneven. Phongpaichit and Baker (1995) note that at one end of the spectrum, a number of peasants are totally absorbed into the urban-based economy and culture as producers or labourers, particularly in the longer-settled, more developed paddy tracts of the central plains. At the other end, many peasant families still live a frontier existence in the forest fringe, while sustaining a semi-subsistence way of life and preserving a culture compatible with the economy. Meanwhile, most of the old peasantry is distributed between both ends of the spectrum as semi-transformed communities. While maintaining their principal residence in the village, growing rice for subsistence and gathering food and materials from the forest, they also buy more of the consumer and durable goods from the urban economy, using supplementary income earned from off-farm work (Phongpaichit and Baker, 1995 : 398).

Although it is noted that inequalities within rural society existed before the implementation of developmental policies, rural differentiation has increased with the intensification of the cash economy, commoditification of land and other resources, increased levels of indebtedness and an inability to meet the high interest rates, health costs, land reclamation by state organisations, and decreases in access to resources. The processes of differentiation, dispossession and marginalisation of small land-owning producers have been widely evident (Turton, 1989; Phanthasen, 1996; Parnwell and Arghiros, 1996). Moreover, a number of researchers also note from their fieldwork experiences in different regions, particularly in the north and northeast, that the traditional systems of co-operation, as well as the traditional leadership institutions, have been transformed by the market economy (Kemp, 1991; Shigetomi, 1992; Rabibhadana, 1993).

However, the transformation of traditional social relations are not always detrimental. As Vandergeest (1993) notes from his research in a Southern peasant village, modernity also means breaking down the previously impermeable barriers separating the dominant from the subordinate classes. On the one hand, the institutions of national citizenship, particularly legal and educational systems, have constructed modern individuated citizens for the purposes of regulation, discipline, and moral improvement. On the other hand, attempts to mobilise and regulate the peasantry through the discourses of nationalism and modernisation also cause a breakdown of traditional authority, providing the individual with a new priority of struggling for universalistically defined individual rights, as well as for collective control over common property (Vandergeest, 1993). Likewise, Neher and Marlay (1995) point out that, to an extent, the traditional patron-client bonds have diminished due to the emergence of new social and political groups, as well as more access to credit provided by governmental agencies in the villages.

(e) The economic collapse since July 1997

After a decade of impressive economic growth in Thailand, at the turn of 1995, there were two approaches to the projection of Thailand's future. One saw Thailand in 2020 as the world's eighth largest economy, whereas the other considered Thailand's growth a superficial illusion, as it was based on borrowed cash and imported technology (Phongpaichit and Baker, 1996). The economic success of not just Thailand, but also her Southeast Asian counterparts, was viewed with suspicion for two reasons. The first focused on the developmental challenges and tensions which were the outcomes of the economic policies, the other was concerned with the sustainability of the miracle (Rigg, 1998). Subsequently, the economic collapse in Thailand mid-way through 1997 after the floating of the Baht supported the latter prediction, though it was realised faster and with greater force than expected. Siamwalla (1997b) identifies the root causes of the 1997 economic crisis by relating the excessive borrowing by the private sector to misguided policies emanating from the Bank of Thailand. The strikingly poor performance in the 1990s of the Bank, which was once renowned for its capability and

integrity, was associated with the decline and internal tension of the technocracy, together with political negligence.

According to a survey conducted in collaboration by the Committee for the Co-ordination of NGOs, the Assembly of the Poor, and the Institute for Social Policy and Management of Kerk University during October 1998 - March 1999, it is evident that the predicaments of the urban and rural poor have been severely worsened by the economic crisis, as their incomes have declined by 25 % in contrast to the nearly 40 % rise in living costs. As 50 % of the laid-off workers returned to their home villages, 24 % of the surveyed villages encountered conflicts of resource utilisation both among local people and between villagers and outsiders. Educational opportunities of children and the amounts of merit-making money in religious ceremonies have also decreased with the economic crisis (*Krungthep Thurakij Newspaper*, July 9 and 13, 1999).

(f) The emergence of civil society

As the prevalent inequalities are reproduced by structural determinants, together with a social culture of patron-client ties, and the traditional belief in differential rights, status, and power, the development of the institutions of civil society in Thailand has been constrained (Turton, 1987; Parnwell and Arghiros, 1996). However, since the 1970s Thai society has witnessed the emergence of a new middle class, the outcome of the modern educational system and the market economy, who play an active role in campaigns for democracy. The number of middle-class sophisticated white-collar labourers increased to several million in the 1980s as an outcome of accelerating economic growth and the educational system (Phongpaichit and Baker, 1995).

On the one hand, Maisrikrod (1997) concludes that although the middle class have been significant in the alteration of the meaning and utility of Thai democracy, they are still on the margin of the state mechanisms. In addition, as the middle class have only played a key role in the alliance for democracy for about a decade, it is unlikely that they could as yet have set any clear long-term political agenda to advance democracy. In fact, the formation of civil society has been affected by Thailand's uneven development in relation to the changing conditions of a booming economy, the distributional

shortcomings, and the uneven democratic development. The disparate members of civil society are divided along the lines of economic bureaucratic polity, and its values range from those giving priority to economic growth and market forces to pressure groups advocating environmental protection and the empowerment of the poor and the oppressed (Girling, 1996).

On the other hand, the new urban radicals play an active role in building up new social movements by establishing or strengthening a variety of institutions and organisations outside the structure of the bureaucratic state, such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the mass media. The movements assert control over their own lives, and over the lives of communities and nation, as well as challenging the prevailing ideologies of state-led economic development. In the meantime, due to increasing demand for and appropriation of natural resources by development enterprises and the increasing levels of pollution, villagers and development establishments fight over natural resources and environmental problems. During the last few decades, villagers and NGOs, as well as academics and students, have actively cooperated as alliances to protest against development projects, particularly dam constructions (Phongpaichit and Baker, 1995; Parnwell and Bryant, 1996; Bello et al., 1998). The networking of the urban middle-class and rural villagers has been gradually established through collective actions concerning the protection of natural resources for the livelihoods and well-being of local people, particularly the poor.

Parnwell (1996) summarises the overview of social movements in Thailand when he states that,

> "..From the Thai student protest against military dictatorship in the 1970s, through recent prodemocracy movements and myriad grassroots initiatives, the tide is slowly turning in favour of the underprivileged in Thai society: disadvantage is no longer synonymous with despair.."
>
> (Parnwell, 1996 : 287)

Bello et al. (1998 : 244 - 250) identify the emergence of the NGO movement, together with its broad spectrum and diverse origins, as a source of development alternatives. To

a great extent, the economic crisis since 1997 vindicates criticisms by the movement of the mainstream development approach and globalisation. However, the movement has to incorporate a number of proposals, including redistribution of wealth, economic growth, political sustainability, and ecological sustainability, into a credible, visionary and pragmatic programme for change. Moreover, the greater challenge for the movement is to translate the programme of development alternatives into a political strategy for change, which integrates all social groups, strata, and classes who are negatively affected by the uneven development process into a broad alliance for change.

According to Phongpaichit (1999), the approach to the question of achieving civil society by civilising the state, which plays a key role in defending old hierarchies, privileges, vested interests and control over resources, has been dramatically polarised by class differentiation. At one end, the modernist middle class believe that the economy and society must advance further along the lines of western industrialised societies, and the peasants have to be upgraded into capitalist farmers through education and technology. At the opposite end, battles within civil society are emphasised by demonstrations, protests, networking and attacks on the dominant cultural discourse. With minimal faith in the ability of representative democracy to civilise the state, they struggle to limit and diminish the power of the state by strengthening the rights of individuals and communities. However, the proponents of both approaches still have a long way to go to achieve a Thai civil society (Phongpaichit, 1999).

In summary, the formulation and implementation of eight national social and economic development plans since 1961 have been predominantly based on modernisation and economic growth. Regardless of the improvement in infrastructure and quality of life, environmental problems and social and economic inequalities have adversely affected Thai people, particularly the poor. Rural differentiation is apparent in rural communities regardless of their degree of dependence on the market economy. Furthermore, the predicaments of the urban and rural poor have been severely worsened by the economic collapse since July 1997. Meanwhile, irrespective of its diversity, the emergence of civil society, comprising the NGO movement, networks of grassroots people, and alliances

of the middle-class, is of significance in challenging the mainstream development paradigm.

2. 2. The Overview of the Position of Thai Women

Drawing on a range of literature on women in Thailand, this section discusses the predominant aspects of the status of Thai women. As the number of studies on women in Southern Thailand is very limited, most of the elaboration is based on Thai women in other regions.

2. 2. 1. Active participation in production

According to a number of scholars, as compared with many other Asian societies, Thai women enjoy a relatively high degree of status and involvement in production and community life (Thitsa, 1980; Kirsch, 1982; Keyes, 1982; Turton, 1987; Rabibhadana, 1993; Pongsapich, 1997). The modernisation efforts in Thai society in the mid-nineteenth century have significantly affected women : changes in the laws relating to polygamy during King Mongkut' s reign (1850-65), promotion of women's education in King Chulalongkorn' s reign (1912-27), and acceptance of women in the expanding bureaucracy at the beginning of constitutional monarchy in 1932 (Tantiwiramanond and Pandey, 1997).

In terms of conventional indicators of labour force participation, maternal and child health, literacy, employment and the right to vote, Thai women seem to be better off than their counterparts in several developing countries, particularly among ASEAN countries. The rate of participation of women in the labour force is highest in Thailand. During 1970-1990, women aged 12-64 constituted 47 % of the total work force (Tantiwiramanond and Pandey, 1997). 68 per cent of all women (over 15) are economically active (Bell, 1997).

2. 2. 2. Gender inequalities

In spite of their high degree of participation in economic activities, Thai women are not only under-represented in relation to economic ownership, but they are also excluded from the decision-making processes in society. In addition to better access to education and health, many women acquired new industrial jobs, which provide them with more money, new status, opportunities and freedom. However, their jobs are low skilled and low paid. In addition to working in unhealthy conditions, a large number of women are concentrated on the bottom rung of the employment ladder (Tantiwiramanond and Pandey, 1997). Moreover, it was not until 1970 that a Thai woman was allowed to enter into any legally binding contract without her husband's official consent (Thitsa, 1980). In spite of almost equal numbers of women participating in the work force, they are still prevented from taking positions of power in the bureaucracy. Of those in positions of leadership, such as MPs, provincial governors, high-ranking bureaucrats, district chiefs, and village headmen, women make up around 5 - 10 per cent. As well as differences in opportunity, many male holders of powerful office also have discriminative attitudes towards women (Phongpaichit et al., 1996). Although women can serve in the military, they are barred from top positions, and they are not admitted to the military academy (Neher and Marlay, 1995).

In addition to discrimination against women in general, married women are especially discriminated against. Marriage bars persist in some occupations, whereas some jobs require only single women or those without young children. It is evident that many large and medium sized factories in Bangkok and its periphery provide no facilities or child-care services for married women. Consequently, workers with young children have to depend on relatives or hire workers to take care of their children (Hnin, 1994; Phananiramai, 1996 : 301; Chareonlerd and Kanchana-aksorn, 1999).

Thomson (1995) attributes women's under-representation in local politics to both social and structural barriers. The social barriers arise from the gender ideology which prevails in Thailand. The female identity is related to providing services for and subservience to men. For many women, as well as their lack of education and

confidence, their responsibilities for child care and household chores limit their time for formal leadership activities. With respect to structural barriers, it was not until 1982 that women could stand for local election. Due to the fact that women started their political participation at the local level 68 years behind men, it will take a long time before a correction of the imbalance in participation and the recommended 30 per cent female participation target is achieved (National Commission on Women's Affairs, 1994).

On top of women's inadequate opportunities for and experience in administration, the traditional belief that only men can be leaders is reinforced by the state sanction of male leadership. Moreover, in some areas, local administration is tightly controlled by the local elites, as such positions provide access to business ventures. The system is sustained by patron-client relationships in which locally elected leaders act as clients to government officials and as patrons to villagers, as both bureaucrats and the elite can gain from conserving and reproducing the system (Thomson, 1995).

The inequalities between women and men are apparent from the early stage of life. Drawing from three national surveys of the situation of children in the 1980s and a review of a number of other studies, Archavanitkul and Havanon (1995) conclude that as far as educational opportunities are concerned, the overall distribution of children in school and in the labour force indicates that girls are at a disadvantage compared to boys. Before education took the form of schools, opportunities to study in the temples were reserved for boys, due to strict rules prohibiting monks from talking to or mixing with women and girls. After compulsory education was made widely available, the difference in the rates of literacy between women and men diminished. However, women have fewer opportunities than men to continue their studies after finishing compulsory education. Parents who have limited resources tend to send their sons to secondary school rather than their daughters. Surveys show more girls than boys of the same age participating in economic work, demonstrating that girls are more inclined to enter the labour force earlier than boys. Although it is common for both boys and girls to help their parents in farm work, girls are also expected to work in the house.

Consequently, girls are likely to undertake more work and family responsibility than boys (Archavanitkul and Havanon, 1995; Phananiramai, 1996 : 301).

2. 2. 3. Prostitution

According to the National Commission on Women's Affairs (1994 : 30), since the 1980s the situation for women and children in commercial sex has been a cause for increasing alarm, which is related to two phenomena with implications for Thailand's future development. Firstly, an increase in the reported cases of AIDS and venereal diseases among young people. Secondly, the increased incidence of the international trafficking of women and children as sexual commodities.

The increased level of commercial sex is a consequence of a complex set of interrelated external (international) and internal factors (domestic socio-economic forces deriving from Thai social values and practices). The international forces are : (1) growing consumerism caused and fostered by Thailand's open economy; (2) a globalised mass media which promotes sexually-oriented materials; and (3) international tourism including package tours to Thailand. The internal factors underlying commercial sex in Thailand are : (1) social acceptance of Thai men's unrestricted sexual freedom; (2) attitudes of male chauvinism; (3) women's values concerning family obligations, and (4) women's vulnerability to exploitation due to their loss of self-esteem caused by rape and maltreatment from parents, relatives, spouse or boyfriends (National Commission on Women's Affairs, 1994 : 39 - 40). Muecke (1992) argues that in a time when the livelihoods of the rural population have been threatened by landlessness, rampant commercialism and poverty, prostitution enables women to send home remittances and perform merit-making activities, which are significant in fulfilling the traditional cultural functions of daughters, conserving the institutions of family and village-level Buddhism and government.

There are a variety of estimates of the total number of prostitutes in Thailand. The number quoted by the government is based on the number of prostitutes who are registered at the provincial venereal disease centers, whereas NGOs take into account

the approximate number of people working as all forms of sexual-service-providers (Pongsapich, 1997). According to Phongpaichit et al. (1996), the number ranges from 150,000 to 700,000, Tantiwiramanond and Pandey (1997) give the number as a half to one million, while the highest figure quoted is 1 - 2.8 million (Bell, 1997). However, Sittirak (1998 : 80 - 81) notes that the "reliable" estimation of the number of prostitutes remains contestable, as doing research on prostitution is based on large numerical variations in the data. Consequently, it is necessary to remain cautious about approximations of the number of prostitutes in Thailand.

Regardless of the different figures, it is undeniable that the international image of Thailand and Thai women has been regarded as being related to prostitution for a few decades, ever since Thailand was the destination of American soldiers who came for R&R (rest and recreation) after finishing their military missions in Indochina (Thitsa, 1980). Keyes (1984) also notes that in the 1970s Bangkok was considered "the brothel of the world". In 1994 the Thai public was shocked by the definition of Bangkok in the Longman new dictionary as a city known for its large number of prostitutes, forcing the authorities to restore the image of Bangkok and Thailand (Pongsapich, 1997). Nevertheless, advertisement of Thai women as "brides on mail order" or desirable mates on the internet has proliferated. The international traffic in Thai women has also become extensive (Bell, 1997).

As far as the Southern region is concerned, a number of its borderline districts have been highly notorious as the locations of commercial sex services for Malaysian and Singaporean visitors. As the Southern region is economically better off than most regions, it was generally assumed that sex workers in the south came from other regions. However, it is noted that a significant number of Southern women also earn their living or extra income as prostitutes (Suthiwong Phongphaiboon, personal communication, 15 August, 1998). When after a fire swept through a slum in Phuket in early 1984, the public was shocked when the remains of five charred corpses were found. They were prostitutes who had been chained up in a brothel and could not escape (*The Nation*, June 30, 1990). Subsequently, in November 1992 a woman from Chiangmai was forced into prostitution in Hat Yai. She and her friends tried to escape

but failed. They were then taken to a police station by the brothel owner to settle the debt she allegedly owed. She was finally killed by police at the Songkhla provincial hall (*The Bangkok Post*, November 6, 1992). In other words, as in other regions, prostitution in the south has been an unsolved social problem for decades.

It was not until the 1990s that concerns for the well-being or the image of Thai women, particularly the issue of prostitution, have been taken more seriously in accordance with international pressures. The anti-sex-trade movement, which involves both NGOs and government agencies, has become strong at both the local and international levels (Pongsapich, 1997).

As mentioned above, during the last ten years an additional fatal dimension has been added to the problem of prostitution, as nearly half the prostitutes in Thailand have tested positive for the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) (Neher and Marlay, 1995). The high rates of extra-marital sex among Thai males, the use of drugs among the poor, and the pandemic of AIDS in Thailand contribute to the rising rates of the disease. Within a decade, women made up 60 per cent of the HIV infected population, most belonging to the poorest groups and the hill tribes (Bell, 1997). It is estimated that by the year 2000 between two - four million Thai people will be infected with HIV, the majority of which, almost 1.5 million cases, will be women of reproductive age (Pongsapich, 1997).

In summary, although Thai women have actively participated in production in all sectors, the extent to which they encounter gender inequalities at different levels of decision-making remains significant. The high number of Thai women involved in the commercial sex industry is the result of various related international and domestic factors, which are discussed further in the next sections.

2. 3. Thai Women in the Interplay of Cultural, Social and Economic Factors

This section elaborates the cultural, social and economic factors which have historically determined the position of Thai women. As Tantiwiramanond and Pandey (1997) note, the worsening position of women is related to both the internal pattern of national development and the international process of surplus extraction caused by the operation of multinational corporations. Moreover, the specific form of patriarchy in each society and country is deeply rooted in its history and culture and sustained by the systems of religion and kinship.

2. 3. 1. Thai women in pre-modern society

Before the introduction of Western education and modernisation in the late nineteenth century, which induced the emergence of a white-collar class, Thai women were separated into two distinct strata : the royal and aristocratic women, and the common peasant women. This was the result of the interplay of three politico-cultural factors : the monarchy, Buddhism and matrilocality (Tantiwiramanond and Pandey, 1997). The roles and status of women in both strata had different social, political and economic dimensions as described below.

As far as the patriarchal system of ruling elite is concerned, the roles of aristocratic women as mothers and wives were relatively passive, but crucial to the continuity of the system through inter-marriage (Tantiwiramanond and Pandey, 1997). As the ideal of the warrior male leading the army was the centre of the culture of the traditional court, the duty of women in producing more warrior males legitimised polygamy, as well as traffic in women as articles of dynastic and political trade. In this respect, women were in subordinate positions and excluded from participation and having rights (Phongpaichit et al., 1996).

In pre-modern peasant society, due to their important role in agricultural production, women enjoyed equal economic status with men. Peasant women had to bear the economic burden imposed by the male-oriented feudal and religious system. The domination of the absolute monarchy, which included the feudal corvee system of mobilising mandatory labour and constant wars, depleted the male labour force in the

villages. Consequently, as well as household work, women also shouldered the burden of subsistence farm production (Phongpaichit et al., 1996). Drawing on Northern Thai culture, Thitsa (1983) indicates that women held powerful positions in traditional life, where the domestic domain, dominated by matrifocality, was synonymous with labour and production. Women were placed in a pivotal position with regard to both production and trading, due to their cultivation of rice for the family unit and the growing of vegetables and some fruit for sale in the local market. Even with the change from family production to wage labour and home industry, as a result of the loss of land or lack of resources to work the land, the equal distribution of work between men and women remained (Thitsa, 1980).

The high status of Thai rural women, particularly in the north and northeast, is associated with their role not only as an important link between fathers-in-law and sons-in-law, but also between households in the same clusters in the village. Due to inheritance rules, all children, male and female alike, receive property equally. In addition to matrilocality and endogamy, it is customary for the youngest daughter to inherit the house, and men to sell out their rights to their sisters. Consequently, as well as being the holders of purses, the women are the "de jure" owners of the land and house, and the husbands live among their wives' relatives, especially their sisters and parents (Rabibhadana, 1993).

As mentioned before, most of the Southern population is Buddhist and 25 % is Malay-Muslim. As far as Buddhist Thais are concerned, men and women have equal inheritance rights (Suthiwong Phongphaiboon, personal communication, 15 August 1998). Although matrilocality is not practiced among the Malay-Muslims, due to the Malay Adat tradition, sons and daughters have equal rights to inheritance and a wife can enjoy higher status than is commonly assigned by Islamic law (Pongsapich, 1997 : 9). Drawing on a review of limited literature on Southern women, Sa-idi et al. (1993) conclude that in tandem with their main responsibility of managing family finances, rural women play an important but supplementary role in the production of family income.

2. 3. 2. Thai women in the modernisation mainstream

During the last few decades of the transformation of Thailand from an agriculture-based to a more industry-based society, the impacts of the implementation of the economic-growth development approach have differently affected women in a variety of social and geographical groups. This section describes a number of social phenomena encountered by most Thai women.

(a) Social differentiation of women

In the early phase of industrialisation only men migrated in search of wage labour, whereas women took care of the families. With the full development of the cash economy, in order to earn sufficient incomes, women had to leave home and children with relatives or parents to help men earn money in urban areas. Due to their child-care burdens, most married women had to work in informal sectors. With the influx of rural migrants to the cities, village families became disintegrated and kinship ties weakened (Pongsapich, 1997).

The female part of the agricultural labour force has declined from 64.8 % in 1987 to 48.8% in 1991, whereas the number of women in the non-agricultural sector has increased from 35.2 % to 51.2 % of the total number of people employed (Tantiwiramanond and Pandey, 1997). The rising female labour force participation rate between 1985-1989 is most significant in export-oriented activities such as the garment industry, electronics and the footwear sector where 90 per cent or more of workers are female (Rigg, 1997). In addition to the increasing number of disadvantaged female workers, a new middle class has also emerged with industrialisation. Due to their access to modern education and employment, a small number of privileged women within the middle-class stratum are able to take advantage of the ever-expanding job opportunities in the modern sector (Tantiwiramanond and Pandey, 1997).

(b) The feminisation of production and consumption

Bell (1997) succinctly concludes that Thailand's "economic miracle" is built on the backs of Thai women, as the development model employs the exploitation of women for rapid economic growth. In this respect, Thai economic growth is not different from the

Japanese experience in the pre-World War II period when textiles was the most important sector contributing to the overall growth process. Japan's export success in the textile sector was related to a number of factors, particularly the exploitation of cheap female workers (Saith, 1987). Thai economic growth has been based on the feminisation of production and consumption as described below.

According to Bell (1997), with respect to the feminisation of production, the following groups of women are significant : (1) A vast pool of unwaged female labour work in agriculture, the household economy, and informal subsistence sector. Seven out of ten women agricultural workers are classified by the government as "unpaid family workers" and only one in seven earn money from their services. Poor living conditions and the absorption of small subsistence farms into larger units have led to an influx from this group as cheap labour into factories and the service economy, in particular the sexual service industry in the cities. (2) A "super-exploited" group of female industrial workers in the export industries producing huge amounts of value added export goods, while earning below-subsistence wages. It is estimated that only 15 per cent of Thai workers receive the minimum wage. With low piece wages and no legal protection 11.2 million Thai women doing piecework at home, which is linked to the export-led industries. (3) Hundreds of thousands of commercial sex workers provide the "human bait" for the $10 billion tourist industry, and for an illegal "flesh trade" economy estimated at between $18 - $ 22 billion.

Evidence shows alarmingly that a great number of women workers have suffered from different kinds of occupational health hazards, including byssinosis (a respiratory disorder caused by inhaling cotton dust), toxicity, stress, and abnormal births. However, only four per cent of women with occupational health complaints gained compensation from the Ministry of Labour and Public Health (*Thai Development Newsletter* 32, 1997 : 75). According to a staff member of the Friends of Women Foundation, women workers in Thailand's Northern Region Industrial Estate (NRIE) have been adversely affected by toxic waste, garbage dumping, water pollution, contamination of arable land, as well as health and safety problems (*Thai Development Newsletter*, 30, 1996 : 66). Since the 1990s there have been cases of unexplained deaths

and women workers who have serious occupational health problems in the electronic industry's export processing zones (EPZs) of Northern Thailand (Theobald, 1996).

The process of feminisation of consumption includes the transformation of the lives of Thai women through the breakdown of the traditional family, the commoditification of women caused by the growth of westernised style advertising images, and patterns of consumption. Equally, development brings affluence to the few, and access to the lives of the rich through television, shopping malls, advertising, and so on, raising the sense of deprivation. Through different forms of prostitution, tourism and the international traffic in women, Thai women have become objects of consumption (Bell, 1997 : 64-71).

In the same way, Mills (1999) identifies a critical intersection between the ideologies of modernity *[Khwaam thansamay]* and of gender, and the way the convergence operates to frame and direct the choices and desires of young rural women who migrate to work in cities. Young rural women have been drawn to Bangkok and other cities not only by poverty, but also by with media portraits of *thansamay* self-fulfilment and status achievement (with an emphasis on commodity consumption and display). On the one hand, unmarried women gain a degree of independence and physical mobility from labour migration. On the other hand, the convergence of the ideologies of modernity and gender in Thailand directs the imaginations of individual women towards intensified consumption practices and desires as consumers and performers of *thansamay* style to indicate their personal autonomy/status. Such a model of gendered modernity also sustains the underlying structures of power and exploitation that render young rural women the preferred labour force for global capital in Thailand.

As far as the Southern women are concerned, Lerdrit (1991) conducted research on Moslem women in Pattani province who worked in factories. Small-scale fishing households suffered economic problems due to the drastic fishing decrease in the Pattani Bay caused by trawlers. Consequently, the women have to commute to work in the urban factories. They also adopt urban culture into their daily activities which brings about some changes in life styles. Yet, the changes have not seriously affected

the social norms of the Moslem village. Furthermore, according to my discussions with a few NGOs' workers in Songkhla, thousands of young women have been drawn into a variety of industries as cheap labour, particularly seafood processing and rubber-glove producing factories, in the Songkhla area. Poor working environments gradually undermine the women's health, and their living conditions are strikingly substandard.

Women workers have been adversely affected by the economic crisis to a greater extent than men. It has been found that women workers who are laid off tend to be unskilled labour who are deprived of basic rights and welfare, and it is extremely unlikely for them to get new jobs (Chareonlerd and Kanchana-aksorn, 1999). NGOs networking on women's issues also report that the economic crisis has resulted in increasing violence against women. The Friends of Women Foundation and Women's Foundation note that in 1998 the numbers of women requesting assistance from them doubled compared with the figures of the previous few years (Bangprapa-Thitiprasert, 1998).

(c) Women's double burden

Like women in most parts of the world, both advantaged urban and underprivileged Thai women have to shoulder the dual burden of career and motherhood. Phananiramai (1996 : 275) remarks that the traditional norms that women take responsibility for housework as well as economic activities have perpetuated throughout social and economic changes. However, economic activities have increasingly come into conflict with women's housework responsibilities. Drawing on the findings of the 1994 Thai family survey, Limanonda (1998) indicates that the extent to which parents attempt to change gender roles by socialising both boys and girls to be in charge of the household is minimal. Most families tend to assign housework to girls, and women are inclined to bear the burden of housework without expecting their husbands' assistance.

According to Phurisinsith and Jirapattarapimon (1994), a number of studies indicate that rural women spend more time working on production and reproduction tasks in households than their husbands. Although in some urban households husbands tend to help their wives with household tasks, working mothers are inclined to rely on relatives and employed child-minders. Drawing from their research on factory women in three Northern provinces, Phurisinsith and Jirapattarapimon (1994) conclude that married

women workers have to shoulder a greater burden than their husbands, as they are responsible for reproduction work in the household according to the persistent social expectation for wives to provide household services. Due to the low level of wages, women also have to work overtime to earn sufficient income. Meanwhile, due to the unavailability of child-care welfare provision, working mothers have to rely on their kinship networks to take care of their young children.

Phongphaiboon (1992) notes that young daughters in the Southern families have been trained to be skilful at doing all kinds of housework, though such a quality is no longer the most significant one for working women. According to Taneerananon and Suwanjinda's (1994) study on women farmers in two villages of Pattalung province, women are actively engaged in both farming and domestic activities. They hold traditional attitudes towards sex roles, and a clear distinction of sexual division of labour is also evident. In addition, Sa-idi et al.'s (1993) study on women in three villages in Pattani province, including two farming Thai-Buddhist and Malay-Muslim villages and one fishing Malay-Muslim one, shows that the women expect more help in different kinds of work, including housework, than they actually gain from their husbands. The women also perceive themselves as playing important roles in earning family income, as well as in the management of family finances. Due to higher economic pressures on Malay-Muslim households, the women are increasingly encouraged by their husbands to work outside the home.

2. 3. 3. Cultural factors

This section elaborates the extent to which Buddhism, gender codes, and gendered obligations, the primary components of Thai culture, have significantly influenced the position of Thai women.

(a) Women in Buddhism

It is widely noted that since the Sukhothai period, Brahmanic and Buddhist teachings have influenced the unequal status between men and women (Pongsapich, 1997). Buddhist practice has been under the control of the political centre since the late

nineteenth century. The extent to which gender discrimination has been reinforced by the strong male bias in Buddhism is identified by Phongpaichit et al. (1996) as follows.

Firstly, although *Phiksuni* (female monks) were common in Buddha's time, and still exist in Mahayana Buddhist practice, they are prohibited in Thailand where women are only allowed to be nuns *[mae chii].* Buddhist nuns are considered inferior to monks in all respects. A man's major merit-making act is ordination, whereas a woman's is "giving" a son for ordination. Consequently, it is assumed that due to their being a wife and a mother, women should be consistently diligent in performing routine merit-making activities, such as providing food for monks and attending temple services (Thitsa, 1983; Kirsch, 1982; Phongpaichit et al., 1996). In spite of the fact that Buddhism provides the opportunity for women to ordain to attain enlightenment by themselves, since women in Thailand are restricted from ordination they attempt to make merit through the ordination of their sons (Kabilasingh, 1998).

Secondly, the religious teaching that men can save their parents from entering hell after death through ordination, regardless of the parents' sins, has reinforced people's insensitive attitudes towards women's rights. A daughter is not valued as highly by parents as a son, for she cannot demonstrate her gratitude by being ordained as a monk. Therefore, she must do anything in the name of gratitude to her parents, including selling herself as a prostitute (Thitsa, 1980; Hantrakul, 1988; Phongpaichit et al., 1996; Kabilasingh, 1998).

Thirdly, the reason that women are not allowed to be present at particular Buddhist rites is not explained in a rational way, but through portraying women as inferior or as an evil hindrance for men who seek a higher goal in life (Thitsa, 1980; Hantrakul, 1988; Phongpaichit et al., 1996).

Fourthly, in spite of a wide variety of women's roles portrayed in the Jataka stories, from which monks usually choose incidents to illustrate sermons, monks tend to pick stories portraying women as mothers, or young mistresses with a duty to look after an

older husband, or temptresses (Thitsa, 1980; Phongpaichit et al., 1996; Kabilasingh, 1998).

Finally, since Hindu beliefs about the polluting effects of menstruation are dominant in upcountry Buddhism, fear of eliminating the sacred power by menstruation is evident in the different discriminative practices towards women, particularly up-country. For example, women's underclothes must be washed separately and kept below those of men. The public attitude that women are inferior is reinforced through such a belief (Thitsa, 1980; Mills, 1993; Phongpaichit et al., 1996; Kabilasingh, 1998).

In addition to providing a moral framework for man's hierarchical precedence over woman, Buddhism also sanctions polygymy and general beliefs and practices devaluing women. The religious domain is masculine and the spiritual path is for men, not women (Thitsa, 1980). However, it is noted that the number of female meditators in both lay and monastic circles is significant, reflecting the advantage women can take from an area of Buddhism which is still relatively free of state control and the male authority structure (Van Esterik, 1982a; Thitsa, 1983; Pongsapich, 1997).

However, Kabilasingh (1998), a scholar who specialises in Buddhism, gives a contradictory view of women in Buddhism by signifying the gender equality in Buddhist texts and relating the gender bias to the social context of the religion. She differentiates Buddhist texts into two levels : worldly Buddhist teaching and Nirvara (Buddhist Salvation). Buddhism emerged in contradiction to the prevalent caste- and male-biased system of Hinduism in the Indian society in which it originated. Although the specific gender-biased content of worldly Buddhist teaching was contextualised by its Hindu domination, the primary Buddhist orientation is to promote the equality of males and females in attaining Nivara. Ultimately, Nirvara transcends gender-attachment.

Likewise, drawing on different life accounts of three laywomen, Van Esterik (1982b) argues that Buddhism does not devalue women's role in relation to their male counterparts, but it is non-ordination that is devalued. As the ordained constitute a field of merit for those who are not ordained, lay women can fulfil their household duties

while storing merit by providing for the needs of the ordained. Laymen and laywomen are not obviously differentiated in Theravada Buddhism, and their distinction becomes less important as men and women age and reduce their involvement in sexual activities.

Furthermore, Keyes (1984) argues against Kirsch and Kin Thitsa that both males and females have equal potential to achieve enlightenment in Buddhism, but that the tension between worldly attachment and orientation toward Buddhist salvation for females and males is distinctive in terms of the gender images derived from the Buddhist world view. The dominant image of women in the popular texts of Buddhist culture of the rural peoples in North and Northeastern Thailand is that of woman as mother. Becoming a mother enables a woman to nurture both a child and the Buddhist religion. The culture of gender which is based on such popular traditions has been reproduced through rituals, sermons, dramatic renditions of myths, courting songs, and so on. Thereafter, the changing dominant image of woman is that of woman as sex object, which is also a new male image accentuating the proving of one's maleness through the acquisition of the objects of one's desire. It is not from Buddhist values that the cultural roots of prostitution originate, but the emergent materialistic culture. However, Bowen (1995) notes that neither Keyes nor Kirsch go beyond the idea that the various texts carry intrinsic meanings to ask what villagers actually think of the texts, as a context-free "standard interpretation" does not exist.

(b) Gender codes

Drawing on a number of traditional teachings and proverbs, Phanich (1998) concludes that particular behavioural standards for women were written by men as normative guidelines to control women as wife, slave and daughter. According to studies of local practices and rituals, to a certain degree male dominance or superiority, which is historically rooted in Hindu or Buddhist teachings, is still evident (Pongsapich, 1997).

According to Mills (1993), gender codes differentiate masculine potency-action in men from feminine beauty, which is particularly associated with virginal purity in women. The disciplined expression of strength, potency and spatial mobility, which is encoded in male bodies, is opposite to the primary ideal of beauty and constraint for female bodies,

particularly the control of young women's gestures, movement and spatial mobility. Double standards in the expected sexual behaviour of men and women is also evident.

However, the idealised forms of male and female virtue, which are linked to sexuality, are only one dimension of the Thai gender system. As well as cultivating a self-image of strength or beauty, men and women can employ alternative means to achieve social respect and prestige. Men may earn the reverence of lay people by joining the ascetic discipline of the Buddhist Sangha. As nurturing mothers who sacrifice for their children, women can enjoy the rewards of respect, material support and religious merit when their children mature and repay their merit debts *[bun khun]* with obedience, financial help and (in the case of sons) ordination as monks (Mills, 1993).

Nevertheless, the double-sidedness of both male and female gender status is asymmetrical, as a disparity in the social time-frame for male and female choices is evident. For men, monkhood is an option open to most men throughout their lives, whether they decide to ordain for a short period of time or not. Men can move between the male sources of prestige, either as monks or men of strength and potency, throughout their lives. In the case of women, as maidenly beauty is predicated upon not only chastity, but also virginity, which is irretrievable, beauty and motherhood are not parallel statuses, but consecutive ones. Furthermore, after a young man leaves the monkhood, he can pick up the patterns of strength and be considered more capable of masculine power after the maturing, "ripening" *[Suk]* experience of the monkhood's rigid discipline. In contrast, with marriage and motherhood, it is unlikely that a young woman will be able to keep the physical standard of beauty, partly due to her increasing number of tasks. It is also important that a married woman not attract the sexual attentions of other men. However, constraints on women's physical modesty and spatial mobility relax after marriage and childbirth, and especially after the menopause (Mills, 1993).

The prejudices of women's mental and physical inferiority reinforced by cultural traditions and religious beliefs have profoundly affected Thai women's self-image and expressions of self-worth (Pongsapich, 1997). The impact of patriarchy on male-female

relations, which was mainly emphasised in the upper class, has reproduced the idea that men should be the "aggressive actor" and that women are "passive". Hantrakul (1988) mentions that in Thai culture men's promiscuity and polygamy are still socially accepted. Thai women, particularly the middle classes, have been socialised to hold conservative and passive discourses concerning sexuality and male-female relationships. Although unmarried women are encouraged to be independent and play an equal role in the economic and social spheres, they have been socialised to protect their virginity, avoid elopement and unwanted pregnancy (Pongsapich, 1997).

The process of socialisation has been sustained through a variety of social mechanisms. In addition to classical literature, it was emphasised in a seminar organised by the National Council of Social Welfare of Thailand in 1980 that women should be humble, well-mannered, and serve their husbands and parents. Thai girls are influenced by the social values of "being good wives" and "being good mothers" in the future (Archavanitkul and Havanon, 1995). Furthermore, drawing from her analyses of Thai language textbooks in primary school, Moller (1999) notes that females are portrayed as "followers" and inactive. Viewing the situations from the sociolinguistic perspective, Boonyavatana (1999) concludes that in spite of the relatively better position of contemporary Thai women, and their having more security and protections of their rights in the New Constitution of 1998, a wide range of conflicts in the identity and status of Thai women are still maintained by the discriminative language used by the media, as well as men and women themselves.

(c) Gendered obligations

This section discusses the two interrelated gendered obligations assigned to women in traditional Thai society and the extent to which they remain influential in Thai women's lives.

- Daughter

According to Rabibhadana (1993), during the last few decades the traditional importance of women has been diminished by a combination of factors. Due to an increased out-migration of youths of both sexes, the number of endogamous marriages in the villages has declined. Sons tend to increasingly claim their rights to inherit land,

as a consequence of there no longer being any new land to be cleared and opened, as well as rises in land value; and sons who migrate to town are urged to sell their property. In spite of sons' expressing claims on their parents' property, the obligations of daughters to support their parents have not yet been abrogated, and have even become heavier. Traditionally, daughters participated in earning income for their parents by working in rice fields, as well as selling their garden produce in nearby markets. Nowadays, migrant daughters who work in urban areas experience high demands for remittances to their parents, whereas sons do not (Rabibhadana, 1993).

The most important relationship in the Thai family is between parents and their offspring, and between mother and daughters in particular. The concept of merit debts *[Bunkhun]*, the favours or benefit which has been bestowed, and for which one is obligated to do something in return, is considered the essence of the relationship between parents and children. A great amount of ***bunkhun***, particularly that derived from the mother, arises from the mere fact of her having given birth to the child, and reinforced by the nurturing of the child. The importance of *bunkhun* contributes to different roles of the sons and daughters. As sons can repay their ***bunkhun*** by being ordained as monks, they are not expected to earn income to support their parents' families; whereas daughters must repay by working to support their families. Consequently, parents expect to gain remittances from migrant daughters rather than sons (Akin, 1993; Pongsapich, 1997; Mills, 1997; Prompakping, 2000).

It is evident from a number of studies that young women migrants send home more money and more regularly than men. Young girls from the Northern and Northeastern villages are specifically in charge of supporting their families, and many of them are forced into prostitution because of such a burden. The increased income not only means greater buying and spending power, but it also leads to greater status for the prostitute's family. In this respect, entering into prostitution is regarded as a relatively respectable decision for a daughter to make in order to solve her family's financial problems (Rigg, 1997). However, drawing on his research in Khonkhan, Northeastern Thailand, Lyttleton (1994) argues that the situation may be different for some Northeastern women whose earnings from prostitution do not significantly contribute to

their parents' betterment. In addition, the market economy, commoditisation, and consumerism contribute significantly to the increasing number of prostitutes (Hantrakul, 1988; Pongsapich, 1997; Kabilasingh, 1998).

Mills (1997) notes that when young rural women move to work as urban wage labour, due to the diminishment of parental power, their independence results in a sense of personal transformation in terms of autonomy and decision-making authority, which most women do not exercise until later in married life. However, migration is also a source of tension and anxiety for most women, as their efforts to acquire and/or preserve a more modern sense of self bring them into conflict with the needs and worries of parents, together with women's own sense of moral and economic obligation to rural kin.

- Mother

As mentioned before, the primary image of women in Buddhism is the nurturing mother who helps sustain the religion by bringing up sons to enter the monkhood, as well as catering for monks. Such an image remains predominant in Thai society, as is evident from Kaewthep' s (1995) analysis of the scripts of modern Thai films and soap operas. Thai mass media indirectly promotes "ideal mothers" by teaching their viewers that it is the duty of good mothers to try to solve their children's problems. The image of Thai mothers reflected in TV dramas and films is that of devoted mothers who sacrifice their personal happiness, willing to be totally responsible for whatever happens to their children. Two components underlying the image are the authority a mother enjoys over her children for her life-time, and her children's gratitude as well as the necessity of making recompense to their mother.

Van Esterik (1996 : 26 - 27) argues that a mothers' breast-feeding or bringing up her children is not an act of altruistic giving and endless sacrifice, but one of calculable "costs" and benefits in terms of time and energy. In rural contexts, the expectation of raising a child for return is explicit in household-based rituals, particularly weddings, preordination, and tonsures. The ritual obligation is expressed as a debt owed to mothers for provision of breastmilk.

In conclusion, the inferiority of Thai women is related to worldly Buddhist teachings and traditional norms which persist irrespective of social and economic changes. Gender obligations can be both enabling and constraining factors in women's lives, depending on particular social and economic contexts as well as their resources.

Drawing on different cases of women migrating from village to city, Eowsriwong (1995) remarks that Thai women's subordinate status does not necessarily always lead to "sexual suppression". This is the case particularly in rural contexts where traditional social and cultural mechanisms, including matrilocality, matrilineality, women's active participation in production and reproduction work, and women's dominant role in rituals, are of significance in protecting women from being exploited by men. However, when women migrate to cities the tendency of women being exploited or violently treated by men increases, as the traditional norms of women's inferiority perpetuate without the coexistence of traditional social and cultural structures.

2. 4. Thai Women in the Dynamics of Development Institutions/Organisations

This section elaborates the extent to which Thai women have been included in the implementation of development plans and a range of development institutions.

2. 4. 1. Women in the development mainstream

The issues of women's development in Thailand have been influenced by the international agenda of women in development. It was not until the United Nations' Declaration of Women's Decade (1975 - 85) that governmental actions in the area of women's development became evident. Governmental efforts for women's development can be differentiated into three levels : formation of national commissions and task forces, formulation of national plans, and implementation of the plans through various schemes and ministries (Tantiwiramanond and Pandey, 1991).

With reference to the national social and economic development plans, women's concerns have not been addressed continuously, and policy on women has fluctuated. In the first few plans development efforts concentrated on men as the family breadwinners, whereas women were classified as welfare receivers. Women's issues were mentioned for the first time in the Third National Economic and Social Development Plan (1972-76), though attention was given only to family planning issues. Women's development was incorporated into other social development programmes concerning education, health and labour in the Fourth Plan (1977-81), which recognised women as a productive force, in accordance with the First UN Decade for Women (1975-85). As the objective of promoting women's development activities in the Fourth Plan was to improve their status by providing them with opportunities to earn supplementary incomes, the women's development programmes were mainly limited to home-bound activities (Tantiwiramanond and Pandey, 1991 and 1997).

The issue of women's development was finally included under an autonomous heading in the Fifth Plan (1986-1990) in order to prepare women to join an industrialised capitalist society by providing training for management skills and primary occupations. Since 1981 two task-force committees appointed by the NESDB have formulated two national women's development plans : the short-term plan (1982-86) to be incorporated into the Fifth Plan, and the long-term plan (1982-2001). Recognising women's double role in both the family and their occupations, the short-term plan emphasised the promotion of education and health services for women in thirty-eight of the poorest provinces in Thailand. Categorising women into six groups, the long-term plan provides a series of guidelines for future policy formulation, as well as some measurements of the different aspects of the advancement of women's status and role, from education to religion and culture (Tantiwiramanond and Pandey, 1991 and 1997).

Subsequently, the Sixth Plan was criticised for its lack of reference to the Twenty-Year Plan, and there was no differentiation of target groups by their needs. In fact, both the short-term and long-term plans were only advisory and had no binding force. Likewise, the dilution of the importance of women's development for the Second UN Decade of Women (1985-95) was also reflected in the Seventh Plan. The previous 20-year plan was replaced in 1992 by a more ambitious new 20-year plan. The Eighth Plan (1997-

2001) differed from the previous plans due to its focus on the development of Thailand's human resources. However, it is only in the section on the Development of the Potential of Thai people that women are referred to in the context of sex workers. In spite of the fact that women are under-represented in decision-making at all levels of government and the government's policy to promote women's political participation, the gender concerns are not explicitly mentioned in the plan (Settaput, 1992; Tantiwiramanond and Pandey, 1991 and 1997; Pongsapich, 1997).

Most of the governmental programmes on women's development are under the jurisdiction of four ministries : the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Education. The most significant women's organisations are women's development committees established by the Department of Community Development, the Ministry of Interior in accordance with the Fifth Plan. The committees have been set up at the village, subdistrict, district, province and national levels, aiming to promote women's initiatives and participation in local development and welfare activities, and to promote women's participation in local politics (Chaithaweep, 1999).

The topic of women's development programmes and projects can be classified into three types of promotion: supplementary income-earning skills, fulfilment of housewives' duties, and child-care. The shortcoming of the programmes is the rigid topics and patterns of the activities included, as they are not based on local women's conditions (Udsah, 1990). Although official development programmes promote housewives' groups and young women's groups, the projects tend to restrict the participation of women to a few areas of activity. Consequently, women are marginalised from major issues of production and community organisation (Turton, 1987). A number of studies also indicate that the income-generating activities of rural women tended to be centralised and concerned with quantity rather than the quality of the programmes. In other words, despite the governmental facilities in reaching out to the majority of women in rural areas, their efficiency is impaired by their overlapping functions, bureaucratic attitude, and top-down approach (Tantiwiramanond and Pandey, 1997).

In conclusion, the government's efforts in improving the situation of women are insufficient due to three factors. Firstly, the government's concern for and understanding of women's issues has fluctuated according to the perceptions of women as welfare recipients and the needs of special groups of women-oriented projects. Secondly, the implementation of programmes tends to focus on the improvement of the traditional role of women as wife and mother. Third, the impacts of the programmes have been minimal, as the extent to which women who participate in training courses can utilise their skills is limited. The women are either occupied with agricultural work or do not have adequate education, credit/funds or management experience to initiate their own enterprises (Tantiwiramanond and Pandey, 1997).

2. 4. 2. Women's non-governmental organisations

Tantiwiramanond and Pandey (1991) divide the evolution of women's non-governmental organisations into three periods : before 1932, from 1932 to the 1960s, and the 1960s to the 1980s. During the first period under the absolute monarchy women's participation in social functions was primarily through informal connections with family and friends. During the second period, which was mainly under the nationalist campaign for military-led democracy, upper- and upper-middle class women began to move beyond their family circles to form their own organisations. In addition to its coincidence with the UN Decade for Women (1975-85), the third period was an era of drastic political change triggered by the students' movement in 1973 which ended two decades of military dictatorship. The period witnessed a diverse involvement of women's associations on issues including social justice and development. In tandem with the rise of various progressive development groups, a number of action-oriented women's organisations have gradually emerged and evolved to carve out a niche for women's role in the public arena and have served as bases for women's collective participation. Nevertheless, in contrast to the development and diversification of voluntary organisations for women, due to the expansion of capitalist consumerism, traditional collective participation of rural women, which was based on reciprocity in agrarian festivals and life-cycle ceremonies, has been weakened and declined (Tantiwiramanond and Pandey, 1991).

During the last two decades new groups of young urban-based middle-class women have organised to search for an alternative strategy for the development of women. Compared to the government's efforts, women's NGOs have stronger motivation and commitment to the issues of women's development and have flexibility in their structures. In the meantime, other conservative groups have also gradually shifted their activities towards women's development. Although most Thai women activists have adopted the Western concepts of starting women's "projects" and of "enhancing the status of women", they are different in terms of their constituencies and approaches. They are either reformist (first wave) groups of elite women with royal links, or feminist (second wave) groups of middle-class urban women with demands for equality and justice from women's perspectives. The differences between the traditional and the progressive groups become more evident in dealing with the most pressing and obvious problem of Thai women, such as forced prostitution (Tantiwiramanond and Pandey, 1991 and 1997).

In conclusion, Thai women's NGOs have contributed to the issues of women's development by bringing issues concerning the disadvantages and gender-biased aspects of Thai women's and their children's lives to public attention (Tantiwiramanond and Pandey, 1997). Furthermore, they function as a bridge between the government and the people, as a watchdog of the government's plans and programmes, and as a mechanism to activate civil society. Their work has rendered women's issues an acceptable public agenda and created new role models for grassroots women. The advocacy of women's organisations has resulted in success in changing some gender-biased laws, including the ninety-day maternity leave, nationality for children born in Thailand of foreign fathers with Thai mothers, and prostitution law prosecuting owners and managers of sexual enterprises (Pongsapich, 1997).

In the 1990s as a result of both the preparatory activities of the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in China, the acute ecological tension and the widening of political space, grassroots women's organisations have gradually begun to work together for collective action (Pongsapich, 1997). Thomson (1997) also identifies the

significant impact of the Conference and the NGO Forum in China on Thai women through the commitment which the Thai government has made at the world gathering lending strength and resources to the ongoing efforts to create a critical mass of female local administrators. The emergence of the Gender Watch Group in 1993 and the Women and Constitution Network in 1996 is of importance in promoting women's issues (Chaithaweep, 1999).

2. 5. Women as Social Actors in the Dynamic Context

Amidst the dynamics of Thai society, particularly during the last few decades when social differentiation, social and economic inequalities, environmental problems, and conflicts over natural resource utilisation have been predominant across the country, together with men, various groups of women have been actively involved in various collective activities. This section gives an overview of women's active participation in different social contexts.

During the last two decades an increasing number of women have actively participated, as leaders and members, in most environmental movements and environmental programmes in Thailand (Manopimoke, 1997). Women, particularly those at the grassroots level, constitute a large part of the participants in environmental and political movements and campaigns. It is noted that in many instances women are better at negotiating and resolving conflicts with government authorities. The focus of Thai women's protests is not gender inequalities, but on issues of resource-use conflicts and the survival of their communities, which is closely associated with their role of providing for household economic security (Sodtree Thad Editorial Team, 1996; Manopimoke, 1997; Chaemsanit, 1999).

Cases of women's prominent roles and achievements in development activities and organisations at the local level have also been highlighted by the media, NGO workers and academics. Feminist academics who have played a key role in promoting women's participation in local politics for a few decades signify an increasing number of women leaders at the grassroots level in different regions as a consequence of collaborative

efforts of various NGOs and academics. Local women have developed self-confidence from their participation in a series of training courses, seminars and workshops concerning women's development issues. Thereafter, they are encouraged to enter into community leadership at the level of assistant village head, then run for the position of the village head themselves. Furthermore, participation in women's groups organised by government officials also provides social and management skills for women enabling their further involvement in public participation (Udsanee Wannithikul, 18 August 1998, and Nongyao Nawarat, 20 March 1998, personal communications). The emergence and development of women's networks for participation in local politics in the north and northeast during the 1990s, which comprise a variety of local groups tackling different aspects of women's issues, signify the achievement of collaborations of academics, NGO workers and grassroots women leaders (Chaithaweep, 1999).

As far as the Southern women are concerned, the same changing trend is also evident. Drawing on their evaluation of the Programme for Environmental Development of Urban Poor Communities, Gothammasarn and Chuaychoo (1997) also identify the significant role of women leaders in community-based organisations in 13 slum communities in Songkhla province. An experienced NGO worker who initiated the Supplementary Occupation for Development Conservation in a Southern village to promote leadership capabilities at the local level during 1994-97 argues that the success of women's groups was outstanding compared to other village groups, as women were determined and cooperated to achieve the group's objectives. Their achievement significantly altered men's discriminatory attitudes towards women's role in community development, as well as boosted women's self-confidence in public participation (Aurasri Ngarmwittayaphong, personal communication, 27 August 1998).

According to my own experience of promoting women's groups in small-scale fishing villages in three Southern areas, due to their leadership potential and strong concerns about the livelihoods of their communities, a number of women have increasingly played key roles in campaigning for conservation of their natural resources (Kittitornkool, 1996). Kaewnoo (1998 : 26) also notes that women in small-scale fishing families in the

Andaman coastal areas, where community organisations have been set up by NGOs, play a leading role in village saving groups.

However, within the contexts of the above-mentioned gender discrimination and inequalities, together with structural hindrances, it is obvious that women's public involvement has not taken place without obstruction. Based on her long-standing experience in development work, Srisawang Phuawongphaet points out that women's participation in local development is one of quantity rather than quality, as they do not take part in decision-making processes (Charncherng-silapakul, 1993). Likewise, Sanitsuda Ekachai remarks from her journalistic experience that women's involvement in the grassroots movements is predominantly limited to the role of supporter (Sodtree Thad Editorial Team, 1996).

In other words, the poor and the underprivileged, women and men alike, have been forced by the necessity of survival to organise themselves to campaign and demonstrate for their livelihoods and basic rights; and the progressive and radical urban middle-class who are motivated by their ideal of social and gender equalities have also been involved in the movements.

2. 6. Southern Women in the Changing Context

Sa-idi et al. (1993 : 84) note from their review of the literature on Southern rural women in 1989, most of which is in Thai, that the number of the studies is sparse. Its quality tends to be uneven with little attempt to contribute to the development of knowledge. However, it is commonly found that whereas rural women in the south play an important, but supplementary, role in production of family income, they are also responsible for managing family money, as well as being involved in informal activities and religious ceremonies.

The above-mentioned notion of limited literature on Southern women remains applicable to the current state. Nevertheless, an overview of the situations of women in the south can be drawn from scattered studies and information. That is, to a great

extent, the Southern women, particularly the Buddhists, have been located in relatively similar social, economic and cultural contexts, as well as having experienced a similar range of social, economic and environmental changes, to those in other regions. They have been actively engaged in production activities, particularly rubber processing, small-scale fishing, rice farming, and service work. Meanwhile, having been socialised to be nurturing daughters and devoted mothers, the Southern women are predominantly responsible for housework, as well as making economic contribution to their parents.

When the region had been integrated into the international market economy, a great number of Southern women became cheap labour supply for export-oriented industries. As Thai women are internationally perceived as the objects of sexual consumption, thousands of women have been drawn to tourist locations, including Hat Yai and other border districts, for foreign customers. Furthermore, when community development organisations and grassroots campaigns against conflicts over the use of natural resources have been increasingly significant in the region, women's active participation in and contribution to the public activities are also substantially evident. However, like women in other regions, the Southern women are socially constrained by gender inequities and sexual discrimination, which remain predominant in social mechanisms and norms.

Conclusion

It is crucial that the analyses of Thai women's situations are contextualised in the social, cultural and economic dynamics of Thai society. Therefore, the chapter began with descriptions of the background of the development process in Thailand, particularly during the last four decades.

The formulation and implementation of the eight national economic and social development plans (1961 - 2001) have been closely related to external political and economic forces, ranging from the counter-Communism policy of the American government after World War II to the internationalisation of economic forces, and the globalisation of capital during the last few decades. However, such international factors

have been mediated through the prevalent economic, social and political elements in Thai society. Although the absolutist state has been transformed into a representative democratic society since 1932, most of Thailand's democratic era was dominated by successions of military-led governments. The modernisation of agriculture into an export-oriented industry concentrating on economic growth, and the centralisation of bureaucracy and business groups have resulted in maldevelopment, as is evident in the environmental problems, social and economic inequalities, and social differentiation facing Thailand. It was not until the last few decades that new social forces have emerged, and alternative development approaches, as well as the issues of women's development, have been brought into the public agenda.

It is commonly noted that Thai women are better off in comparison to their sisters in many Asian societies. However, evidence of gender inequalities and exploitation of women is apparent in a range of social phenomena, particularly prostitution, and the international image of Thailand. Historically, Thai women have been actively involved in production and reproduction activities since their communities were subsistence-based until the villages were incorporated into the market economy. As a great number of women migrate to work in cities as cheap wage labour in the service sector and export industries, it is undeniable that the economic growth of Thailand has been based on the exploitation of Thai women. Due to gender inequalities and sexual discrimination, which are deeply rooted in cultural and social institutions, women are concentrated on the bottom rung of the employment ladder, as well as excluded from the decision-making process.

In spite of a decline in women's importance in traditional society, which was associated with matrilocality in rural communities, migrant daughters continue to fulfil their obligations by sending remittances to their parents. It is only a small number of women in the middle social stratum who benefit from expansions of educational and job opportunities in the modern sector. Nevertheless, most working women in all social strata share the same double burden of being mothers and home makers. Women's role as a mother has been consistently highlighted through Buddhism, as well as other social

and cultural mechanisms, which also perpetuate the inferior image of women in contemporary Thai society.

In tandem with the dynamics of the development process, the visibility of women's issues in Thailand has also emerged from the international influence of the WID mainstream and internal social forces during the last three decades. Although the issue of women's development has been incorporated into the development plans, the extent to which the implementation of the women's development plans, programmes and projects has contributed to the welfare of women, particularly those at the grass-roots level, is constrained by bureaucratic limitations. In the meantime, the emergence of new social forces has resulted in the growth of women's development non-governmental organisations. Increasing public awareness of women's issues and amendments of particular gender-biased laws are the achievements of the long-term advocacy and collaborative efforts of women's NGOs, academics and women's groups across Thailand. Irrespective of gender inequalities, it is evident that a large number of women have played a significant role in public issues, such as conflicts over the utilisation of natural resources, ecological problems, and the protection of the livelihoods of their families and communities

To a great extent, the overview of the situations of Southern Thai women is not different from that of Thai women as a whole, and is a consequence of the interplay of social, economic and cultural factors in Thai society. However, the extent to which women in different social groups have been impacted by the social, economic, and environmental changes wrought by the development process varies according to a range of factors, including location, class, age, religion and so on. An insightful understanding of the impacts of the development process on women in a Southern Thai village can be derived from an in-depth study based on a particular conceptual framework, which shall be elaborated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN THE DYNAMICS OF HOUSEHOLDS

This chapter draws a conceptual framework for the investigation of the position of women in households and villages that will take place in chapters 6 and 7. As mentioned before, the study focuses on women, how changes in the village context have impacted on the position of women in their households, and their responses to such changes. The chapter incorporates two interrelated units of analysis, households and women in the households. It is also crucial to differentiate women according to class, age, and marital and kinship relations in order to gain an understanding of the changing position of women (Moore, 1988 : 80).

Sharma (1986 : 45) compares conducting social science research to shining a torch in a darkened room. When one object is illuminated, others are left in shadows. Relating the analogy to her review of literature concerning women in Bangladesh, White (1992 : 3 - 4) indicates that the shadows thrown reflect a predominant set of values and interests. In order to build up an understanding of gender in Bangladesh, she argues that it is necessary to question what is said, to trace the debates as they are presented, as well as to trace the shadows.

As far as Thailand is concerned, Reynolds (1994) notes from his review of the literature on gender relations in Thai studies that colonialism is one of the reasons why the issue of gender relations, as well as social and labour history, has been neglected. As Thailand was not colonised, unlike other Southeast Asian societies, relations between the rulers and the ruled were not polarised, and racial differentiation was not highlighted

by a European-staffed police force. However, the literature on Thai women is, to an extent, influenced by Western feminism. The shift in the Western feminist paradigm from the portrayal of women as victims of patriarchal structures towards the social and cultural constructions of gender and woman's agency has impacted on the contemporary research on Thai women. The studies concentrate on the relationship between Thai women sex workers and the ideal of women as mothers and daughters. Moreover, the number of studies of the family and domesticity is limited, and they mainly focus on female-specific occupations and groups, such as prostitutes, nurses, pious Buddhist laywomen, Buddhist nuns *[Mae chii]*, and elite female philanthropy (Reynolds, 1994: 80).

Meyzer (1986) noted that there were few documents concerning the effects of the dynamics and dilemmas of the impacts of the changes caused by modernisation, industrialisation and the development processes on Southeast Asian women and their relationships. However, during the last ten years there has been little development of "the torch" or the state of knowledge concerning the relationship between changes and Thai women at the micro level. Consequently, my ultimate objective in this chapter is to develop a framework to illuminate the position of Thai women from available materials.

My frame of reference is, to an extent, unavoidably based on Western or Westernised feminist writings on Third World women. In addition to a limited number of studies on Thai women, frameworks and research on Southeast Asian, South Asian, African and South American women are examined and incorporated into my analytical framework. However, explanations of women's position necessitate substantial variations in circumstances, as well as in gender and "familial" ideologies, to avoid reductionism and ethnocentrism (Moore, 1988: 127). Mohanty's (1991: 66) critique of the privilege and ethnocentric universality of Western feminist writings is also significant. That is, concepts such as reproduction, sexual division of labour, family, marriage, household, etc. cannot be used without taking into account their local cultural and historical contexts.

With respect to Ban Khao Bua, my research site, during the last two decades economic and ecological changes have transformed the villagers' main source of income from rice growing to rubber cultivation. Nevertheless, livelihoods remain based on natural resources, including the lake and various forms of produce from the land. Village households, most of which are matrilocal, are the units of production and consumption, and women have been actively involved in production and reproduction work, as shall be elaborated in more detail in Chapter 5. An analytical framework of how changes have impacted on village households and the position of women needs to be related to the village context.

The chapter aims to develop a conceptual framework to investigate the position of Ban Khao Bua women as members of households and the community within the changing context. It begins with arguments concerning changes in the "high status" of Southeast Asian women. The subsequent section defines the concepts of household and family, and examines the extent to which perspectives on household dynamics in the Third World contexts can be incorporated into the framework. A number of concepts are drawn from a review of the literature on the relationships of changes and women's status. Finally, the chapter elaborates the conceptual tools to be employed in chapters 6 and 7.

3. 1. The "High Status" of Southeast Asian Women and Changing Contexts

As Van Esterik (1995) notes, due to its historical and cultural specificity, Southeast Asia is an area defying generalisations due to the concepts of bilateralism. This is particularly the case in relation to gender issues due to the complementarity of male and female roles, and a lack of exaggerated opposition between male and female ideologies. This section discusses diverse notions regarding the position of Southeast Asian women.

3. 1. 1. The "high status" of Southeast Asian women

Karim (1995) argues that the premise of unequal power generating gender hierarchies is not applicable to Southeast Asia. Distinctions of hierarchy and differences in the relationships of rank, class and gender, are diffused by the bilateralism of social relationships, resulting in structural dissimilarities between the Southeast Asian and the South Asian models.

Errington (1990) goes beyond bilateral kinship to explain why Westerners view women throughout Southeast Asia as having "high status". For instance, in many parts of Southeast Asia, women not only inherit wealth and noble titles equally with their brothers, but they also maintain control over their wealth after marriage. In addition, the birth of male and female children is equally valued. Women are usually responsible for family finances and often become traders, whereas men tend to receive money from their wives. In contrast to the subordinate circumstances of women in India and China, little attention has been paid to the issue of gender in Southeast Asia due to the relative economic equality of men and women, as well as the paucity of symbolic expressions of gender differences. Similarly, Wolf (1992) relates the nuclear and bilateral characteristics of the Southeast Asian family systems to women's abilities to engage in extra-household economic activities and the control over income, which are strikingly different from women in South and East Asia.

According to Karim (1995), women and the less privileged classes in Southeast Asian societies articulate power in an invisible, informal, non-bureaucratised and alienated way from a system of privileges and rights sanctioned by the state. In spite of the cultural history of male dominance in the indigenous milieu in Indic-Buddhist and Islamic traditions, women maintain their roles in public religious activities, particularly folk spiritualism, which represents the heart and soul of the Southeast Asian societies. Although women in Southeast Asia are not visible in formal politics, or the great religions endorsed by the state, their inputs into politics and religion prevail in the informal sphere, which can be conceptually elusive to social scientists who come with (a specific range of) Western feminist perspectives. Instead of perceiving those who practice these social intangibles as powerless, it is likely that these social intangibles are

viewed as valuable human resources, and strategic bases for establishing core human relations, and that those who use them are operationalising their culture in a constructive and productive form (Karim, 1995).

However, Van Esterik (1982a) notes that in spite of the common phrase "the high status of Southeast Asian women", there is no agreement upon the definition of status. As most studies imply a comparison with men or with Western women, it is necessary to establish operational indicators in specific contexts. In Southeast Asia, the domestic domain incorporates the social sphere, and women play a significant role in social activities. Consequently, domestic acts of food preparation and presentation may be counted as public performances. Domestic work, such as cooking and the fetching of water and firewood, is integrated into home-based production work, rendering an economic and commercial value beyond the consumptive needs of the family and household. Southeast Asian women's budgeting and accounting skills are derived from house-keeping and independent economic enterprises. (Karim, 1995: 28 - 29) argues that an open-ended system of social relations is created with undifferentiated boundaries between the private and public, personal and communal, the core who control resources are not differentiated by gender but economic productivity. Access to resources and working capacity are significant determinants of power, overriding the factors of biology and gender.

Likewise, drawing on a number of studies, Carsten and Hugh-Jones (1995: 41) indicate that the house in many Southeast Asian and South American societies is an important locus of both kin group and politico-religious entities. The house can be simultaneously "private" and "public", as well as being related to women or men or both. It also provides models for the wider polity while being domestic entities. According to her anthropological study in Langkawi Island, Malaysia, Carsten (1997) concludes that the house in Langkawi is the locus of "private" and "domestic" space, as well as a "public" and "political" site. The process of incorporation of new household members occurs in the house through the everyday activities of women. As the image of the community is that of the expanded house, its central ritual is an expanded version of the most central domestic activity, the consumption of a cooked rice meal. However, while relating the symbolism and elaboration of the house to the specific features of Langkawi's history

and political economy, she also outlines the differences between Malays who live in Langkawi as well as paddy-farming peasants and urban people in mainland Southeast Asia.

Karim (1995) argues that most of the earlier discussion on the "centrality" of Thai women in the context of family, neighbourhood and friendship relations has been excluded by current academic concerns for the Thai and Southeast Asian "village community". The structuralist approach of the "village community" theory has removed women to the periphery, and imposed confusion between the "peripheralisation" of women by anthropologists and the peripheralisation of women in actual life. As research on Thai women in lowland urban centres has focused on the peripheral roles women assume when they migrate to or reside in the city, it is not gender, but geographical or demographic displacement and the resulting cultural decontextualisation of women (and men) that contribute to marginalisation. Since new meanings of gender are derived from the towns and cities, the bilateralism of gender previously observed becomes a hierarchy of gender within the period of agrarian transformation.

3. 1. 2. The dynamics of gender relations in changing contexts

In spite of the above-mentioned notions of the "high status" of Southeast Asian women, Van Esterik (1982a) cautions against assuming that their lives are timeless or unchanging. In fact, it is crucial to distinguish between their mythical past and their grim present.

Ong (1989) notes that indigenous values contributing to women's economic and social rights and privileges, including centre-periphery relations, matrifocality, and the priority of rank over gender, are increasingly co-opted or superseded by larger systems of inequality. Ong and Peletz (1995) argue that post-colonial modernisation in Southeast Asia necessitates reconsideration of the links between the meaning of gender and material forces, which shape communities, nations, and transnational arenas, as well as the negotiation of everyday life. Gender identities in the late-twentieth-century world are not made exclusively according to local knowledge, but in the context of widening

geographies of production, trade, and communications. It is necessary to contextualise the dynamics of gender and social life in the shifting and widening fields of knowledge and power related to Southeast Asian modernities. Indigenous notions of gender equality and complementarity have been reshaped in the context of capitalist development, nation-state formation, and globalisation. Hart (1992) also concludes from her study in Muda, the main rice-producing region of Malaysia, that although bilateral kinship is practiced, the appearance of gender symmetry conceals important conflicts between genders and generations, particularly age-gender hierarchies and the asymmetrical treatment of sons and daughters.

With respect to Thai society, as mentioned in Chapter 2, as well as gender inequalities, it is evident that social disintegration and differentiation, as well as poverty and environmental degradation across the country, are consequences of the implementation of development policy during the last four decades. The economic and social conditions that contributed to the structural significance of women, namely new frontier land, low population density, women's dominant role in rice production, distance between the state and local culture, and daughters' land inheritance (Van Esterik, 1995), seem to be ruled out by the implementation of development and the domination of the state. Undeniably, to an extent, bilateral kinship remains predominant, and the structure of kinship terminology is determined by the distinction between generations, and age differences within a generation, rather than differences between the sexes and lines of descent (Rabibhadana, 1984; Pongsapich 1997). Moreover, the generally-accepted assumption of women's predominant role in keeping and managing the family finances also requires investigation.

In summary, Southeast Asian women are generally in a better position than those in many Third World societies due to the historical development of the social, cultural and geographical characteristics of the region. However, to a great extent modernisation and globalisation have affected traditional gender relations, and it is necessary to contextualise the different nature and extent of change. My analysis of the environmental, social and economic changes in Ban Khao Bua provides an opportunity to explore the exact nature of these transitions in practice. It is based on the analytical framework delineated in the next sections.

3. 2. The Dynamics of Household Livelihoods and Their Impacts on Women

This section begins with the distinction between the family and the household. Subsequently, a conceptual framework is drawn from reviews of perspectives on the dynamics of household livelihoods and the literature on the relationship between social and economic changes and women.

3. 2. 1. Family and household

First of all, it is crucial to differentiate between the family and the household, as they are not necessarily the same thing (Roberts, 1991). The relationship between the family and the household requires social and historical analysis (Moore, 1988).

According to Yanagisako (1979), systems of kinship relations, relations of descent through parentage, and systems of affiliation through marriage in different societies vary in terms of the composition and organisation of domestic groups. However, anthropological searches for universal characteristics of family are based on the belief that procreation and intense emotional bonds are the definite core of the family. The family constitutes the fundamental relationship between human beings, as it contributes to generational reproduction of the population. Accordingly, the family is defined as a social institution constituting social and cultural meanings regarding sexuality and procreation, and part of a larger network of kinship relations. The family comprises an interacting, co-resident, social group co-operating economically in daily tasks for the maintenance of its members, and provides a basis for the recruitment of household members, whereas the household is not necessarily composed of persons recruited solely through kinship and marriage (Jelin, 1991a; Roberts, 1991).

With respect to the concept of the household, Evans (1989) concludes that households are not universal or "natural" units, as they vary across cultures in accordance with the complexity of relations of production within particular contexts. Likewise, Casley and

Lury (1981) note that the definition of the household varies according to local conditions within particular countries. They suggest that in developing countries,

> "..a household comprises a person, or group of persons, generally bound by ties of kinship, who live together under a single roof or within a single compound, and who share a community of life in that they are answerable to the same head and share a common source of food.."
>
> (Casley and Lury, 1981 : 188)

In summary, Wolf (1990) clearly differentiates the family as defined by kin relations, whereas the household signifies economic factors such as co-residence or income pooling. Sharma (1986) suggests that "..focusing on the 'household' rather than the 'family' enabled researchers to apprehend the household group as a resource system, a group with its own internal economy yet also linked with the wider economic system..."(Sharma, 1986: 2). However, as households are located in structures of cultural meanings and differential power (Guyer and Peters, 1987), it is necessary to define households as a unit of resources embedded with and influenced by cultural constructs, as well as situated in and related to the dynamics of interrelated social, economic and cultural components.

Household activities are associated with social processes of production and reproduction, but their involvement with production organisations differs according to their specific class and sector. For any household, access to resources is important in relation to performing activities to meet their needs. Consequently, the household has to operate social mechanisms to procure, defend, continuously reproduce and manage the required resources. Marriage, the formation point of the family/household, is defined as the point of departure for a study on the household process. Spouses bring in different resources to the new enterprises. As the working capacity of household members changes throughout their life cycles, changes in domestic organisations are brought about (Jelin, 1991a; 1991b). In other words, the ageing process of household members underlies the dynamics of the domestic group development and its economic conditions. Such changes in households include changes in the identities of household

members, their ages and relationships to one another, and their productive capabilities and consumption requirements (B. White, 1980).

In the Southeast Asian context, the rural household is a social unit of production, consumption and investment, and women play an active role in all these activities. The pursuit for household resources constitutes two components. Firstly, to increase opportunities for households to earn income. Secondly, the dynamics of income handling and decision over the allocation of resources. Households are not isolated units, but clustered together into groups with a degree of interdependence based on kinship and locality which form the village community (Heyzer, 1986: 13 - 14).

With respect to the Thai context, in a national-scale family survey, Limanonda et al. (1995) define the household *[Khrua-ruen]* as individuals residing in the same house and taking their meals together, regardless of which family each individual belong to. The family *[Khrob-khrua]* refers to a group of individuals who resides in the same house (either on a permanent or temporary basis) and whose individuals are related to each other through blood line or marriage (Limanonda et al., 1995 : 12). The notion that *Khrua*, or kitchen, is the common term in both words seems to imply that the sharing of food, as well as other household resources, among its members is the primary feature of the domestic organisation in Thai society. In fact, the "household" is the unit usually used in survey projects, whereas "family" is a common term used by Thai people to refer to their domestic units.

According to Vichit-Vadakan (1994), a family in the Thai context constitutes not only the individual' s spouse and children, but also parents and grandchildren (if there are any), as well as relatives who may be living with the person. The family is the source of support, comfort, a sense of belonging, an identity, and a set of expectations for an individual. Family and kinship are central to everyday Thai life. Likewise, drawing on her analysis of the plots of Thai films and soap operas, Kaewthep (1994) points out that in Thai society "family" refers to three generations of extended family members, including grandparents, parents and children, together with aunts and uncles, and all in-laws. As families and households in Ban Khao Bua overlapped as a group of people

who have kin relations and rely on the same resource system, I shall use both terms interchangeably.

3. 2. 2. Perspectives on the dynamics of household livelihoods

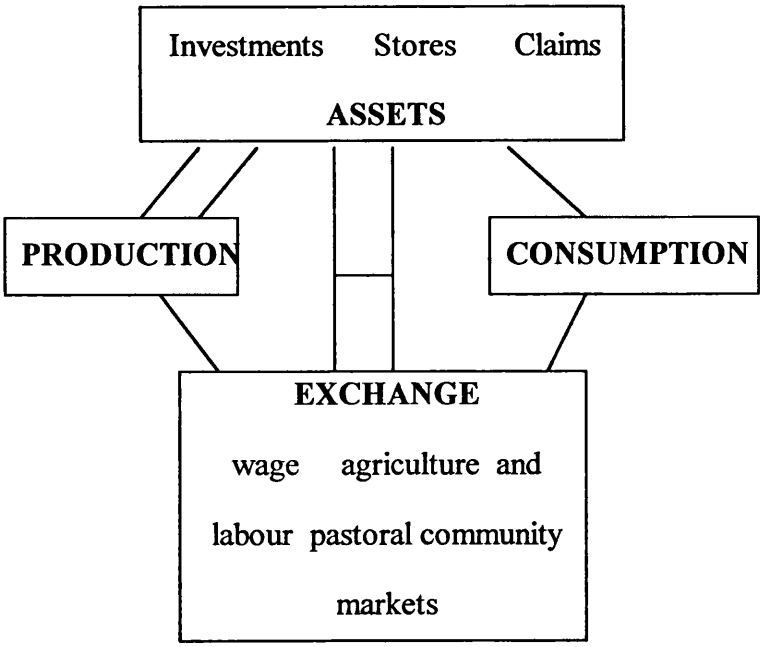
This section discusses the extent to which perspectives on the dynamics of Third World household livelihoods can be applied to my analysis of changes in households and related to the study of the position of women in households.

In the 1990s a number of approaches to studying changes in households, particularly in the Third World context, have emerged with policy research efforts to eradicate poverty. The following five perspectives are summarised and examined to determine the extent to which a conceptual framework can be delineated from the approaches.

(a) Analysis of household assets

With reference to Amartya Sen's analysis of famine in the 1980s, Swift (1993) identifies three categories of household assets in Third World rural communities, which determine a household's vulnerability. The household's assets are placed into the relationship between production, exchange and consumption as follows:

Figure 3.1 Relations of household assets to production, exchange and consumption



Source Swift (1993 : 4)

With respect to assets, households accumulate investments, including human capital in terms of health and education, as well as individual, and collective productive assets. The stores of food and money or bank accounts can secure the households' livelihoods. Furthermore, the claims households can make on resources range from household extended families to other households within the community, patronage relationships, as well as the government and international community.

Assets are surplus when the outcomes of production and exchange exceed the level of immediate consumption, and the households use the surplus for both tangible and intangible investment to maintain and improve materials and claims. In turn, assets can be transformed back into production inputs. Whereas investments are controlled and mobilised by individual households, claims require some levels of collective action in relation to a range of wider social and political processes (Swift, 1993).

(b) Asset vulnerability framework

Moser (1998) introduces the concept of vulnerability to capture many aspects of the dynamic socio-economic well-being of individuals, households and communities facing a changing environment, particularly for the urban poor. The degree of vulnerability is inversely related to ownership of assets. The framework incorporates five types of assets. Labour capital is the most important asset for the poor. Human capital includes health status, skills and education. With respect to productive assets, the most crucial for the urban poor is housing. Social capital encompasses reciprocity within communities and between households, which is based on trust derived from social ties. Finally, household relations are defined as a mechanism for pooling income and sharing consumption. Intra-household conflicts not only decrease the value of household relations, but asymmetries in rights and obligations on the basis of gender and age also differentiate households' capabilities to cope with economic difficulties (Moser, 1996).

According to Moser (1996; 1998), the dynamics of vulnerability can be investigated through the asset "stocks" that poor households accumulate or lose during periods of hardship. A longitudinal urban study undertaken in Zambia, Ecuador, the Philippines and Uruguay shows that household asset stocks are the net result of accumulation over time. Households use different restructuring strategies to reduce vulnerability that vary

with existing traditions, including social institutions, political and economic factors. The research identifies three common types of household restructuring to reduce age and gender-related vulnerability with strategy sequencing dependent on life-cycle stage.

Although households function as safety nets in conditions of poverty, their structures of opportunities and constraints can also be sources of inequality for members. Consequently, the weight of coping with economic crises is unequally distributed within households. Women's labour and household relations are interrelated assets, as they are in charge of both production and reproduction work. Due to women's multiple responsibilities, they assume a disproportionate share of the burden of adjusting to adverse economic circumstances. However, whereas women contribute to the household income themselves, their responsibility for providing food for their families puts them in conflict with men when trying to gain access to men's income. In addition, economic pressures exacerbate the conflicts between husband and wife, as well as parents and children (Moser, 1996; 1998).

(c) Sustainable rural livelihoods

Scoones (1998) develops a framework for investigating sustainable rural livelihoods that can be applied at different scales, including the individual, the household, the village, the region and even the nation. Within the context of institutional processes, diverse livelihood resources result in abilities to pursue various livelihood strategies, which lead to different levels of livelihoods and sustainability. The livelihood resources are categorised into four types of capital : natural capital includes natural resource, stocks from which resource flows and services necessary for livelihoods are derived; economic/financial capital includes cash, credit, savings, basic infrastructure, production inputs and technologies; human capital incorporates skills, knowledge, good health and physical capability; social capital includes networks, social claims, social relations, affiliations, associations upon which people depend to pursue livelihood strategies requiring coordinated actions.

In order to understand sustainable livelihoods, it is necessary to analyse how the complex and dynamic connections between livelihood resources are sequenced and combined in the pursuit of a variety of livelihood strategies in a dynamic and historical

context. Additionally, the approach emphasises the study of formal and informal institutions and organisations to explore the institutional matrix mediating and influencing the processes of livelihood change (Scoones, 1998).

(d) Capital assets

With reference to Scoones' work, Carney (1998) formulated a framework of sustainable rural livelihoods as a practical tool for the Department for International Development (DFID) by drawing a pentagon of five different types of assets : natural capital includes natural resource stocks and flows, such as land, water, wildlife, biodiversity, and environmental resources; social capital entails social resources, such as networks, group membership, access to institutions; human capital incorporates skills, knowledge, labour and good health; physical capital encompasses basic infrastructure, production equipment and other means for pursuing their livelihoods; and financial capital constitutes financial resources.

The framework aims to explore access which different social groups or households have to particular types of asset, as well as to investigate asset status and its dynamic elements in relation to sustainability. It also requires an understanding of the context in which the assets exist, as well as the specific structures and processes which define people's livelihood options (Carney, 1998).

(e) Household Resource Profile Approach

Lewis and McGregor's (1993) Resource Profile Approach constitutes a range of resources invested and managed to ensure households' survival and advancement : material resources include flows of income and stores of value; human resources incorporate age, gender, educational status, condition of health; social resources constitute households' relationships in the market, community and with the state; cultural resources are based on the accumulation of status via cultural means; and natural resources encompass water, land and so forth which are the resource bases of the households.

In addition to embracing all the above interactive components of household resources, this approach signifies cultural resources by relating social meaning embedded in religious and culture-based activities in specific contexts to the status acquisition and sustenance of the households.

According to McGregor (1998), the Household Resource Profile Approach emphasises analysis of the dynamic interrelation of economic and socio-cultural dimensions of households' coping strategies. The extent of analysis also incorporates the wider contexts of community, market and state in order to understand the impact of the interplay of such an institutional triangle on household vulnerability, as well as to enable formulation of policy interventions at different levels. In other words, the Household Resource Profile Approach is a conceptual tool developed to investigate the ways the poorest members of society attempt to maintain livelihoods and well-being, providing theoretical balance between the conceptual value of agency and structural constraints (McGregor, 1998).

These five perspectives indicate the crucial components underlying the dynamics of households' livelihoods and well-being. In addition to the particular ecological settings, which are the sources of natural resources that households rely on, the households are affected by complex and dynamically inter-connected social, political, cultural and economic contexts. The livelihoods and well-being of household members depend on both tangible and intangible inter-related components, namely: production and financial inputs; human capabilities in relation to health, skills and education; social relationships and collaborations at different levels; as well as cultural constructs from which claims on other resources can be derived. The analytical framework in Chapter 6, which is based on the Household Resource Profile Approach, is used to investigate the extent to which changes as consequences of the interplay of state and market at the community level have impacted village households.

In addition, two issues emerge from the above review. Firstly, it is conceptually important to distinguish between social capital and social resources. Social capital has a wide range of meanings, including public goods (Carney, 1999), collective entities to be promoted for all households' well-being, whereas social resources are defined as the social relationships that an individual household invests in and employs for its livelihood. Secondly, Moser's (1996) asset vulnerability perspective signifies household relations and proportionally greater impact of vulnerability on women, whereas other perspectives seem to assume that household members share responsibility for production and the impacts of changes equally.

3. 2. 3. The household as a differentiated unit

The perspective of household livelihoods as a unified domestic unit reflect one of the most frequently criticised assumptions of H. Becker's (1965, 1974, 1976, 1981) New Household Economics model; that is, each household endeavours to pursue a collective set of goal for the interests of all members. Increasing evidence of intra-household inequality contrasts with the unitary interpretation of the neoclassical economic perspective. A substantial number of studies conducted since the 1980s indicate that the ways women and men spend income under their control are systematically different. Whereas women allocate a high proportion of their income to food, health and other forms of child welfare, men tend to keep a higher proportion of their income to their own personal consumption (Whitehead, 1981; Pahl, 1983; Beneria and Roldan, 1987; Bruce and Dwyer, 1988; Moore, 1988; Kabeer, 1991; Wolf, 1992; Young, 1992; Moser, 1993; Hart 1995).

Rural Southeast Asian households are similarly not undifferentiated units, particularly the poorer ones, as conflicts about income are often a major cause of tension (Heyzer, 1986: 14). In the Thai context, evidence also contradicts the assumption of the family as a unified unit. Heyzer (1986 : 14) notes from her study in Lampang, a Northern Thai province, that a pooling of resources between husbands and wives is apparent only in better-off households. Men and women in many households in all social strata bargain

with each other over the use of resources, resulting in husband-wife conflicts. Likewise, drawing on her study of a slum community in Bangkok, Thorbek (1987) concludes that conflicts between men and women are an important aspect of family life in the slum. In order to gain a distribution of family income that meets the needs of all family members, particularly children, the women fight with their husbands with regard to their expenditure on such items as gambling and minor wives.

According to Richter and Havanon's (1995) analysis of the 1988 Socioeconomic Survey conducted by the National Statistical Office of Thailand, women have no mechanism to gain access to knowledge of household income. Although women can keep all the money they earn, husbands may reduce their contribution to the household pool. As women do not want to argue with their husbands, they try to manage the budget to meet family needs from their own earnings. Additionally, Richter and Havanon also found that households of all occupational statuses allocated a substantial amount of money for alcohol and tobacco, the amount of such expenditure being closely related to the number of male workers in the households.

According to feminist critics, the concept of the household as a joint utility function also obscures the possibility of investigating ideological, cultural and economic conditions of unequal exchange and exploitation between family members, particularly men and women, in decision-making and resource allocation. The structural dimensions of gender and other inequalities are also inconceivable from this perspective (Folbre, 1988; Evans, 1991; Kabeer, 1991; Moser, 1993).

Consequently, in addition to the Household Resource Profile Approach, the framework set out for the analysis of the dynamics in village households, it is necessary that issues of intra-household relations be incorporated into the analytical framework of the position of women in households. The concept of household as a differential unit of resources is taken into account.

3. 2. 4. Review of literature on the relationship between changes and the position of women in households

This section reviews literature on the relationship between changes in environmental, economic and social conditions of Third World communities and the position of women, including case studies in the Southeast Asian, South Asian and African contexts, to identify the components of the conceptual framework of the position of women in households.

Hart (1992) investigates the impacts of technological changes in the Muda region of Malaysia on farming households. The evidence shows the emergence of a new middle class and the proletarisation of a substantial segment of the rural population. Women in middle-class households are fully domesticated, whereas poor households became more spatially and sectorally divided. Women take over agricultural work by actively organising labour gangs working inside and outside villages, as men move into low-wage nonagricultural jobs. The differentiation of class as well as gender underlies the gender/sexual division of labour.

The impact of environmental change on competing livelihood systems in Sarawak, Malaysia is examined by Heyzer (1995). The emergence of differentiated property rights and division of labour requires complex negotiation to resolve the conflicts between the interests of men and women in relation to resource management, allocation, utilisation and entitlements.

The study of mountainous communities in Northern Pakistan conducted by Joeke (1995) focuses on the relationship between changes in the livelihood system, which are a consequence of the opening of highways and the establishment of a non-governmental organisation project, and the gender division of labour. Due to the intensification of agriculture, the workloads and work burdens borne by women of different ages increased.

Awumbila and Momsen (1995) study the relationship between environmental changes and gender in Sri Lanka, Burknia Faso, Ghana, Sudan, and the Carribean by

determining the allocation of time by women to measure changes in gender roles under conditions of environmental stress. It is found that the life cycle labour pattern for women changed drastically. Women had shorter hours of rest than men, gender roles became more flexible, whereas environmental degradation increased women's workload.

Likewise, a study of changes in Kenyan community livelihoods in situations of environmental crisis is conducted by Oniang'o (1995), focusing on the gender division of labour and decision making in households. The evidence from both marginal and high potential areas shows that women's participation in major decision-making at the household, clan and community levels remains limited, as a consequence of gender bias regarding women's land ownership. When men migrate, women engage in market activities as well as keeping the homestead. Conflicts in the allocation of family income were also found to cause friction in many households.

Drawing on a number of case studies on Third World women experiencing conditions of ecological change, Collins (1991) identifies three areas where global economic processes have caused gender-linked changes in production, including the division of labour, the impact of changes in women's resource tenure on management strategies, and the impact of production innovations on the division of labour and the sustainability of production. Social and economic influences are also associated with changes in the gender division of labour, and patterns of resource management (Collins, 1991: 39).

In her research of a Sierra Leonean village, Leach (1991) identifies resource flows among different social networks, including kin ties, friends, patron-cliental relationships; as well as the dynamics of conjugal economic arrangements in terms of reallocation, conflict and bargaining processes. It is evident that women and men have different bases for resource claims. Men rely on their positions in kinship and patronage groups, whereas women depend on reciprocal resource flows and emotional pleas, which are an insecure source of long-term livelihoods.

Based on the experience of Sub-Saharan Africa, Allison (1985) specifies factors for an analysis of gender relations in the rural sector. In addition to women's access to land, it is necessary to pay attention to: a) analysis of why and how household production units change in size, composition and form within a specific time scale; b) the extent and mechanisms through which traditional household structures have been affected by new family forms and social relations of production and reproduction; c) the complex variation in authority relations and power structures within household units. The analysis also requires consideration of both intra-community and intra-household levels of the gender division of labour.

Leach et al. (1995) draw a number of elements from recent studies, which are conducted by the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, in Africa and Asia into a framework for analysing gendered dimensions of environmental change. The analysis begins by identifying gendered responsibilities and labour with a broader attention to the values and subjectivity within which gender-divided roles acquire their meanings. It then incorporates an understanding of gender differences in property rights, which is linked to institutionalised gender relations, particularly conjugal contracts, as well as authority and obligations within broader family contexts. In addition, it is crucial that such a micro analysis is both based on a comprehensive understanding of the particular ecological characteristics, which shape the processes and outcomes of environmental change, and is related to the wider political economy.

Adjusting Amartya Sen's (1990) "Cooperative-Conflict" model with a focus on human resources as means and ends in the analysis, Kabeer (1991: 32-36) elaborates a framework of the "resource-cycle" of the household economy. The framework incorporates a flow of decisions and activities concerning production from the household and a flow of consumption and investment into the household for the reproduction of human resources. The framework encompasses four concepts for the study of gender relations of production and power within the household:

1. Distribution of material resources among household members, namely rights, control of access to land, human capital and other productive assets.
2. Gender division of labour within the household economy.

3. System of household resource management : the interdependency of labour and implications for relations of control and command within the household economy, as well as gender ideologies related to the evaluation of labour contribution.
4. Distribution of welfare outcomes, as well as gender ideologies governing both the distribution of claims on welfare-enhancing resources and individual perceptions of self-interest (Kabeer, 1991: 36).

To sum up, in addition to the gender/sexual division of labour, key concepts derived from the above review include gender differentiations in access to and control over the means of production as well as distribution and consumption of welfare. The significance of cultural constructs mediating the structures and processes of production, distribution and consumption is also highlighted. Consequently, the analytical framework of the position of women in households incorporates the issues of gender ideologies, the gender/sexual division of labour, power relations and the allocation of household resources. The extent to which these issues are interrelated and of significance in illuminating the relationship between changes and the position of women is discussed in the next sections.

3. 3. Changes and the Position of Women in Households

This section elaborates the conceptual tools required for an investigation of the relationship between changes in household resource profiles and the position of women in households.

3. 3. 1. Gendered ideologies

The ideologies to which women are subject are articulated and perpetuated through the complex mesh of cultural norms and practices within the contexts of different levels of institutions, including the state, the community, and the family. However, gender ideologies can be both disabling and enabling factors in the lives of women (Afshar and Agarwal, 1989 : 1 - 2). The significance of gender ideologies as cultural constructions of women's ways of life is highlighted by the following two ethnographic studies

conducted in different South Asian contexts. The extent to which gender ideologies are incoporated into the issues of gender relations is also delineated in the next sections.

Drawing on her study of Mukkuvar women in KaDalkarai Uuru, a Catholic fishing community in Tamil Nadu, South India, Ram (1991) concludes that capitalist transformation of the fishing village is mediated through cultural constructions of caste, landscape, the female body and the labour process. Culture is defined as "..a field of conflict, internally spilt by relations of power and contestation between dominant and subordinate groups" (Ram, 1991 : 232). The domesticity of Mukkuvar women is based on complex and contradictory constructions of femininity, the maternal "good" Maataa versus the "evil" E-eski. Due to cultural constraints, women's means of access to natural resources is different from that of men. For fear that their appearance would upset the balance between men and their environment, women cannot go out to the sea and fish, or even occupy the spaces adjacent to the sea, particularly for young and single women. As men are gradually incorporated into wage labour or small-scale capitalist entrepreneurship, women's dowry, which was the basis of their control over a subsistence-credit economy, is invested in male ventures. The typical Mukkuvar pattern of matrifocal, nuclear families favouring women's solidarity and management of household finances is affected by men's long-term separation from home, as women are put under pressure to live with parents or in-laws and then conform to the pattern of the joint family (Ram, 1991 : 231 - 236).

With reference to her research on women in Kumirpur village, north-west Bangladesh, White (1992) also remarks on the mediation of cultural construction in unequal gender and class relations. In Bangladeshi society, inequalities in class and gender determine access to resources. Men participate in the major markets concerning agriculture, land, new technology, male labour and credit, whereas market relations between women comprise minor resources, including smaller animals, barely paid female labour and smaller scale loans. As men and women share their livings in the households, their market activities are related to and dependent on one another. Due to the feminine ideal of subordination and dependence, women put great efforts into fostering social relationships with men as wives and mothers, as well as cooperating with other women as investment in social resources for their survival and advancement.

Afshar and Agarwal (1989: 1 - 2) classify the gender ideologies and associated cultural practices from Asian women's circumstances into four broad categories, the ideology of seclusion, the ideology of exclusion, the social construction of femininity, and the demarcation of roles by gender. The cross-cultural commonality in the assignment of roles by gender is based on the assumption that domestic work is women's responsibility, regardless of a variety of expectations concerning women's work outside the home. However, ideologies are also subject to change over time, though the processes are complex and insufficiently understood. With respect to both the above-mentioned case studies, women are not only excluded from significant access to resources and means of production by the social constructions of femininity, but also confined to the household space while taking responsibilities of housework. However, they are not passively subordinate to the dominant ideologies. The extent to which they manoeuvre for autonomy with the prevalent social resources is dynamic and contextualised, something which is discussed in the next sections.

Another approach into the analysis of gender ideologies is related to the significance of gender identities. Papanek (1990) extends the concept of entitlement from material form to social norms and cultural values, which formulate and perpetuate social consensus of gender inequalities. Sociocultural entitlement is defined as "the socially and culturally recognised rights of specific categories of persons to particular resource shares" (Papanek, 1990: 170). Unequal entitlements are based on imputed needs, which are different for categories of persons, and signify a broad spectrum of ideas about physiological and psychological processes in women and men. Through the different norms and expectations of the groups to which they belong, women, as well as men, learn to accept their life circumstances.

Amartya Sen (1990) also extends the concept of entitlement analysis to divisions within the family. That is, gender inequalities are perceived as natural and legitimate by all parties, particularly women. One's individuality is derived from the coexistence of different identities, including membership of a family, a class, an occupation group, a community, or even a nation. The various and perhaps conflicting identities influence a person's understanding of one's interests, well-being, obligations, objectives and

legitimate behaviour. In some contexts the family identity may be predominantly influential so as to obscure women's perceptions of their own individual welfare, as well as their subordination.

In the same way, Moore (1994: 192 - 194) argues that gender ideologies, particularly social identities, are significant in processes of social reproduction at the household and state levels. Households as well as other social institutions function in the process of social reproduction by producing persons with particular attributes which are congruent with socially established patterns of power.

The outcome of bargaining and negotiation within the household is not only determined by economic assets but also gender ideologies, which entail the notions of contractual relations between household members. The marital contract, or the allocation of resources within the household, is based upon the issues of rights and needs of household members. Differentiated social identities are the outcomes of the exercise of power. The interpretation of rights and needs is always associated with the constitution of social identities. When social constructions appear most natural, transparent and are taken for granted, they become most powerful. The discourses of rights and needs are stratified according to gender, race and class differences. The process of differentiation privileges or disadvantages persons in their capacity to make claims on material and symbolic resources at both the domestic and societal levels (Moore, 1994 : 90 - 100).

As mentioned in Chapter 2, Thai women are culturally provided with the roles of daughters and mothers. The analysis of the position of Ban Khao Bua women shall focus on the extent to which changes at the household and community levels are related to gender ideologies, particularly women's social identities. In addition, aspects of intra-household gender relations, which are mediated through cultural constructions, are also discussed in the next sections.

3. 3. 2. Gender/Sexual division of labour

Feminists have argued for a long time that sexual division of labour is a crucial conceptual tool for the understanding and changing of the social position of women (Mackintosh, 1981). From the feminist perspective, the sexual division of labour helps to enforce relations of domination and subordination, which create structures of privilege and discrimination (Molyneux, 1979; Berenia, 1979).

In order to achieve economic maintenance of the household, the sexual division of labour includes both biological and social roles of women and men in parenting, the work carried out by men and women networks, ego-centric ties and a diffusion of role and status concepts concerning gender. However, the sexual division of labour does not only mean a list of men's and women's jobs, or the cultural values of appropriate activities for men and women; it also constitutes a system for allocating the labour of both sexes to activities, and distributing the products of such activities (Whitehead, 1981). In other words, what women and men do within the division of labour influences not only their individual claims on household resources, but also their individual consumption (Kabeer, 1994).

According to Edholm et al. (1975), the sexual division of labour requires an analysis of not only economic (productive and reproductive), but also political and religious activities. The allocation of activities between the sexes is also mediated by the social construction of gender identity, a powerful ideological operator. As White (1992 : 126) concludes, the sexual division of labour ".. is the responsibility for what gets done (who gets blame when it isn' t).." Consequently, to challenge the gender division of labour within a social order is to challenge the basis of core gender identities (Kabeer, 1994).

Sen (1990) identifies the sexual division of labour as one part of the unequal social arrangements in the wider social context. The established social arrangements outside the households not only reflect the traditional intra-household divisions, but also reinforce the inferior position of women and the unequal distribution of resources within the households.

However, the sexual division of labour varies from one society to another, particularly in relation to the tasks defined as "domestic" and/or "women's work" according to particular social relations, for instance class and age. Not all women perform domestic tasks, as some groups of women are exempt from domestic activities due to their class and age (Moore, 1988 : 83).

In other words, the interdependence between men and women, the relationship of reproduction and production, and gender ideologies should be taken into account when analysing the gender/sexual division of labour (Whitehead, 1981). In fact, it is unlikely that a clear line between production and reproduction can be drawn, due to the complexity of the relationship between productive and reproductive activities at the domestic level, particularly in rural households. When production is viewed as part of the overall process of reproduction, the distinction becomes artificial (Beneria, 1979). In the same way, Moore (1988) argues that the productive and reproductive roles of women cannot be analysed in isolation from each other.

In rural Southeast Asian communities, it is difficult to define the distinction between domestic and non-domestic work. A woman's life constitutes agricultural production and domestic responsibilities, which are intertwined into social networks within the rural community (Van Esterik, 1982a; Heyzer, 1986). Likewise, most of women's supplementary income earning activities in Ban Khao Bua are based around household activities and an extension of their cooking skills. In this respect, the line drawn between production and reproduction work in the following paragraphs is tenuous and is drawn only to enable an understanding of these interrelated components.

(a) Production

According to Beneria (1982), it is crucial that the term "production" constitutes the economic activities of both exchange values through the market, as well as the production of use values. A shift of production from the domestic to the market sphere is the result of the gradual penetration of the market into economic life. In industrialised societies, where subsistence depends primarily on wage earning, large parts of production are removed from the household sphere; whereas domestic labour in predominantly agricultural societies comprises a higher degree of production.

Agricultural and household-related tasks tend to be integrated in time and space. Consequently, productive and reproductive activities are intertwined. The gradual penetration of the market into rural economies does not change the productive and reproductive nature of such activities, but the degree of their integration into the market (Beneria, 1982).

However, drawing on her analysis of Mukkuvar women, Ram (1991 : 227) argues that

> "..The missing element in the Western economic diagnosis is culture. It is the cultural construction of sexual difference that provides the fundamental key to the allocation of economic roles..."

(b) Reproduction

Edholm et al. (1975) note that the concept of reproduction has been taken up both by Marxists and those who try to theorise the situations of women. It is necessary to differentiate three levels of theoretical abstraction of "reproduction", namely social reproduction, reproduction of the labour force, and human or biological reproduction.

Social reproduction refers to the reproduction of the conditions of social production in the entire social system, but the way in which social reproduction prevails is still a matter of debate. Regarding the reproduction of the labour force, it is essential to analyse the means by which individuals are allocated to the labour force in order to understand how it is reproduced. Due to their biological function of human or biological reproduction, women have been historically regulated or appropriated of their generative power by different control mechanisms. In other words, it is through the mediation of different levels of social institutions and ideological mechanisms that the reproduction of the labour force and the reproduction of human beings are reinforced to sustain women's subordination (Edholm et al., 1975).

Beneria (1979) notes that, in addition to biological reproduction, which is based on women's reproductive function, women in most societies are assigned to two fundamental aspects of the reproduction of the labour force, including child care and domestic labour for the daily maintenance of the labour force. Rural women's

workload not only encompasses daily maintenance and reproductive activities, but also incorporates direct participation in social production of use and exchange values, circulation activities (marketing of goods and petty trade), and wage labour. As domestic labour is also subject to technological changes, it is important to understand the extent to which changes in the nature of domestic labour increase women's involvement in the capitalist economy (Moore, 1988 : 53). In addition, the nature and scope of women's work are determined by gender ideologies, as well as age, class and caste differentiations (Ram, 1991; White, 1992).

In conclusion, the analysis in Chapter 7 will focus on the relationship between changes in household resources and the gender/sexual division of labour as well as mediating gender ideologies

3. 3. 3. Power relations in the household

This section gives an overview of the concept of power from different perspectives, most of which are of significance in illustrating the extent to which women exercise their power vis-à-vis their household members, particularly their husbands.

The unique and complex attribute of power in the household context is highlighted in two different ways. The qualitative difference between "winning" or "losing" in the familial or marital setting is unique in that arguments and conflicts tend to be managed in such a way that whatever solutions are reached can be jointly lived with (Sprey, 1975). Consequently, it is unrealistic to study the use of power in its interdependence with processes of decision-making, bargaining, and problem-solving in families without taking the unique cost-reward structure of marriages and families into account.

In contrast, from the feminist perspective, such a uniqueness of power relations within families is related to its embeddedness in the most intimate nature of the arena of human relationships (Kabeer, 1994; 1997). Households are inhabited by people who define themselves in terms of familial identities, as well as often love each other, while still exercising or experiencing power. This complex interweaving of self-interest and altruism, co-operation and conflict makes the operation of power within households

elusive. Quantitative techniques cannot capture acts of subordination, as the concept of "subordination" refers to a relationship, not an individual. It is only with a deep understanding of the cultural context that such relationships can be analysed. Moreover, it is not only the broader structural constraints that are significant, but women themselves also internalise certain constraints, which renders the intra-household power relations an irreducible subjective element. These elements cause difficulties in disentangling choice and power within the household (Kabeer, 1997).

The following paragraphs elaborate different dimensions of power, most of which are inter-connected, to be incorporated into the analytical framework.

(a) Control over surplus resources

Positioning power within a system of interrelated actors, Burt (1977) describes three conceptualisations of power based on quantitative estimations, including influences, control over valuable resources via possession, and control over valuable resources via possession constraints. According to Blumberg (1991), one's relative economic power is associated with the degree of control over surplus allocation, rather than the control over resources needed for bare subsistence. The issue of power as control over resources is discussed in the next section.

(b) Decision- and non-decision-making

Ham and Hill (1993) review diverse methodological approaches into the investigation of power, beginning from a decisional approach, as a basis for understanding the complexities of power relationships. Nevertheless, this perspective has to be supplemented by an analysis of non-decision-making processes, as well as an investigation of the way power is exercised to shape people's preference, the most important dimension of the concept. The following issues clarify the concept of decision-making.

- Methodological and conceptual complications

As reliable accounts of household decision-making in terms of its processes and outcomes require long-term and intimate access, it is difficult to obtain the necessary data via observation, not to mention interviews. With respect to conceptual complications, one has to resolve the issue of whether power is unidimensional in order to conclude that a particular partner has the power, or whether individual partners have different types of resources at their disposal, which requires analysis of complex and overlapping systems of sanctions and controls (Sharma, 1986: 101 -102).

- "Implementing" and "orchestrating" decision-making

Safilios-Rothschild (1970) argues that familial power is a multidimensional concept. It is necessary to incorporate the outcome of decision-making, the patterns of tension and conflict management, and the prevailing division of labour into any overall understanding of familial power. Decision making within the family is also a multiphasic process involving other crucial dimensions of power, including influence and authority. Influence is defined as the degree to which formal or informal, overt or covert pressure exerted by the one spouse upon another (or by one family member upon another) is successful in imposing that spouse's point of view concerning a pending decision in spite of initial opposition. Meanwhile, a spouse has the authority to make decisions when cultural or social norms designate him as the *ex officio* "rightful" person, and the person with authority does not need to exert influence on the other family members, as far as his "power rights" are not seriously challenged. Moreover, to assess who is the most powerful person in the family is difficult, as it depends on which level such an assessment is made. The one spouse may relegate one or more decisions to the other spouse, as they find these decisions relatively unimportant and very time-consuming. Such a relegation of decision-making power (which usually includes the relegation of certain tasks) does not mean less power for the relegating spouse. In contrast, the relegating spouse enjoys more power than the "implementing" one, as they can orchestrate the power structure in the family according to their preferences and wishes (Safilios-Rothschild, 1970).

- Decision-making in the household economy

Based on A. Sen's (1990) "Cooperative-Conflict" model, Kabeer (1991) develops a framework for an analysis of co-operation and conflict between interdependent household members by focusing on the issues of separability, control and autonomy within the household economy. The analysis begins with household accounting systems, as the extent to which women are independent in economic transactions determines the degree they cooperate with men. The nature of the interdependencies within the labour process is also associated with the likelihood of co-operation or conflict within the household. Gender-segregated production, such as separate fields, separate crops, and separate sectors, leads to the increased possibility of women responding independently to production incentives and bargaining with men in terms of household resource allocation and distribution. An understanding of the decision-making processes within the households can be derived from an analysis of these issues, as well as property rights, labour processes and extra-household resources in the local context.

- Gender ideologies and women's "choices"

Drawing on her research on women in Kumirpur, White (1992 : 40) defines power as social relationships which are the outcome of the interplay of economic relations and cultural constructions of gender identity. Indicators of power are clearly evident in choices about resource use. However, the assumption that decision making is derived from the choices of individual actors is not consistent with the experience of peasant societies like Bangladesh, as actions are based on obligations rather than personal choices. Equally, relating power to decision-making or the ability to make choices, Kabeer (1999: 437) emphasises that "...choice necessarily implies the possibility of alternatives..", it is crucial to differentiate the first-order choices, which are strategic life choices critical for people to live the lives they want, from the second-order choices which are framed by first-order choices.

(c) Shaped perceptions

In addition to a focus on overt and covert conflicts, Lukes (1974) argues that it is vital to investigate whether the most insidious exercise of power prevents people from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognition and preferences to accept

their role in the prevailing structures, either because they cannot seek other alternatives, or they consider it natural and unchangeable, or they perceive it as divinely ordained and beneficial. It is also necessary not to assume that the absence of grievance is equal to consensus. The latent conflict, which comprises a contradiction between the interests of those who exercise the power and the real interests of those who are excluded by the powerful, is incorporated into the analysis of intra-household power.

(d) Actor-oriented perspective on power

Dimensional descriptions of women's power can lead to an exclusion of women as actors, as well as a neglect of the nuances, failures, acquiescent, resistance, and successes of women's attempts to negotiate their lives (Wolf, 1992). Thus it is necessary to investigate the exercise of power without relegating women to the passive position of "cultural dope", as well as taking into account the fact that power is a process, and not only linked to domination, but can also be a potentially positive or enabling force (Davis, 1991 : 72).

In this respect, an actor-oriented perspective on power is of significance. Power can neither be modeled into a zero-sum pattern nor be measured by quantity or quality, as it is relational and emerges from dynamic processes of social interaction (Long, 1992).

> "..Agency (and power) depend crucially upon the emergence of a network of actors who become partially, though hardly ever completely, enrolled in the 'project' of some other person or persons. Effective agency then requires the strategic generation/manipulation of a network of social relations and the channeling of specific items (such as claims, orders, goods, instruments and information) through certain 'nodal points' of interaction.."
>
> (Long, 1992: 23 - 24)

Drawing conclusions from the situations of women beekeepers and tomato pickers in Western Mexico, Villarreal (1992) notes that, regardless of their constraints in terms of sex, status, as well as economic and political situations, women have the capacity to manipulate their subordinate positions using their relations with their spouses, kin, friends and political allies. As power is fluid and difficult to measure, it encompasses an ability to make room for manoeuvre with a degree of consent, a degree of negotiation and a degree of power. Consequently, there is always evidence of struggle, negotiation

and compromise in power. Even those labelled as "powerless" or "oppressed" within particular circumstances are not totally passive victims, and may also be involved in active resistance. In other words, power is associated with the ways in which people deal with and manipulate such constraining and enabling elements (Villarreal, 1992).

In conclusion, the analysis of the relationship between social and economic changes and women's power vis-à-vis their household members, particularly their husbands, incorporates the above-mentioned aspects of power, namely possession of surplus resources, decision-making, shaped perceptions, and the actor-oriented perspective on power.

3. 3. *4. Household resource allocation : the management of family money*

As the household is a unit of resource flow, points in the flow of household resources can be examined to illustrate the control different household members have over the flow at each point. In societies in which money is a source of power, the balance of power between husband and wife is reflected in the control over economic resources. The difference between control, management and budgeting is identified at various points in the flow of money through households and different levels of decision-making (Pahl, 1983).

Control is primarily exercised where money enters the household economy, and is related to the decision regarding which allocative system should be adopted, and the extent to which each spouse has control over their own money and access to joint household money. *Management* is concerned with the operation of the specific allocative system adopted by the couple. *Budgeting* is a matter of spending within particular expenditure categories (Pahl, 1983).

Drawing on a review of previous work, Pahl (1983) identifies three main determinants of the allocative systems adopted by couples, namely the income level of the couple, the sources of their income, and the normative expectations of the culture within which the household is located. With a focus on management, Pahl's analysis of allocative

systems includes two criteria for categorising the allocative systems, the individual's responsibility for expenditures, and his/her access to household funds. Based on the assumption of the household comprising two parents and their dependent children, the allocative systems in households are differentiated into four types, the whole wage system, the allowance system, the shared management system, which can be further separated into two sub-categories of one and two earners, and the independent management system (Pahl, 1983).

The interrelation of power and gender ideologies which mediate the management of family money is discussed below.

(a) Relationship between women's earning abilities and power in households

Drawing from a large number of studies, Young (1992) concludes that the connection between income-earning and power in households is not a simple one. It is not always the case that the higher the wife's contribution to the total budget, the greater her control or say over how joint income is spent. In order to understand the issue of power over resources within the domestic setting, it is crucial to analyse the differences in social position and relative social values of men and women within their kinship group and the wider community.

According to Whitehead's (1981) comparative study of two allocative systems in Ghanaian and British household relations, a woman's power relative to other household members, particularly her husband, is related to her possession of the resources she has either produced, or earned within the family based household. Such power is not simply associated with the wages commanded in the labour market, or with the relative labour input into agricultural production.

With reference to her study of households in Shimla, North India, Sharma (1986) argues that the meanings of management and control vary with income levels. Women's ability to make budgeting decisions does not mean power for poor women, as their expenditure choices are strictly limited by money at their disposal, and the survival of family members depends on their capacity to economise and bargain.

Similarly, drawing on studies of Javanese households, Wolf (1992) argues that, although Javanese women may manage or budget household income, such management needs to be distinguished from controlling decisions regarding household expenditures. In fact, women are forced to earn much of what they then can manage or control. Notions of female dominance may conceal not only men's inconsistent contribution to family income, but also women's heavy workload. It is concluded that, in spite of their decisions with regard their own labour, their tiny incomes, and occasional household consumption, the decision making of Javanese women cannot necessarily be translated into conceptions of status or power.

In the case of rural Bangladeshi households, women's room for manoeuvre is dependent on the quality of their relationships with their husbands and their mothers-in-law. Although women's earning abilities render them more centrality in household affairs, this does not translate into power. Their *de facto* power, as a consequence of their alliance with their sons, does not render them formal or long-term authority. Moreover, in a context where women's gender identity is one of dependence, women's financial contribution also tends to be concealed. Women attribute the credit for the support of the household to their husbands while devaluing their own contribution (White, 1992).

In other words, White (1992 :136) concludes that "..economic activities may affect relations within the family, this cannot reverse the overall culture of male domination.."

(b) Gender ideologies and women's management of family money

It is evident from a substantial part of the literature reviewed by Young (1992) that, culturally, women are related more with the collective aspects of household/family consumption, whereas men are concerned with the security or political status of the family, household and kin groups. Such social values permit men to adopt a more self-centred approach to their own and their families' resources and to their own consumption. The pattern is similar not only in developing countries, but also in developed societies.

Whitehead's (1981) study shows that in both Ghanaian and British cases women are concerned with the collective or family aspects of consumption, whereas men tend to be much more individuated in terms of their control over resources and in their own consumption. Such a conclusion corresponds with the idea that women's role in child rearing leads to an ideological mother-child dyad as the significant social unit for women.

According to Berenia and Roldan (1987), their study of urban women in Mexico indicates that, whereas their husbands allocate different proportions of their income to household expenditures, women chose to pool their entire earnings, though they have little choice due to their low income levels. The ideology of maternal altruism encouraged them to devote their earnings to meet collective rather than individual needs. For older women who have conflicts in conjugal relations and have no access to social welfare or a pension, investing in children's food and education could reflect a measure of personal interest in what on the surface looks like altruism.

Similarly, Ram (1991) notes that Mukkuvar women consider their ultimate responsibility to be the survival of their domestic units through the use of all resources at their disposal. In other words, as well as maternal affection, women's devotion of their resources to the livelihoods and well-being of their families is related to both economic and cultural factors, including women's investment in their long-term security, which is indistinguishable from that of their family units, and gender ideologies, particularly that of maternal altruism

In the rural Southeast Asian context, where the struggle to maximise household income and manage the allocation of resources is crucial for household maintenance, the role of women is extremely important. Women in the poorest social strata not only contribute more time, but also generate more income than men within the agricultural household economy (Heyzer, 1986). Likewise, in most of the households in Ban Khao Bua, in addition to their main sources of income, women spend much of the remaining time working for supplementary income for their families. Women's responsibilities for keeping family money are also recognised.

Therefore, it is necessary to examine the relationship between changes in household resources and women's control over family money through consideration of the different control points in the flow of family money, women's power and gender ideologies.

In summary, this section delineates four interrelated concepts applicable to the analysis of the relationship between the dynamics of household resources and the position of women: gender ideologies, cultural constructions which mediate issues of intra-household gender relations; gender/sexual division of labour; power relations between women and household members, particularly their husbands; and the allocation of household resources, particularly the management of family money.

3. 4. Women's Resources

In spite of the subordinate position of women in different societies, women are not passively subject to the unequal social relations and male-biased cultural constructions. On the contrary, the extent to which they utilise various strategies for their own and their families' benefits is evident (Ram, 1991; Wolf, 1992; White, 1992; Villarreal, 1992). However, the extent of women's strategies is limited to what Kandiyoti (1984) defines as "patriarchal bargains".

Based on two typical systems of male dominance, one from Sub-Saharan Africa, the other from Middle-East, South and East Asia, Kandiyoti (1984) remarks that in addition to shaping women's gender ideologies, patriarchal bargains in specific societies demarcate women's strategies and negotiations, as well as the extent of their resistance and struggles.

According to Ram's (1991) and White's (1992) studies of women who are confined to domesticity, it is apparent that women make room for manoeuvre within their cultural constraints by relying on their prevailing social resources, including kinship and extra-household networks, as well as by conforming to the dominant gender ideologies. In fact, the outcomes of their strategies not only benefit themselves but also their families,

as women relate themselves to their family units. This section discusses these resources to determine the extent to which they can be applied to the study of Ban Khao Bua women.

3. 4. 1. Kinship and other extra-household networks

According to Moore (1988), in many societies kinship networks structure the basic links beyond the household, and activate a variety of resources, ranging from succession to public position and inheritance of goods and entitlements to various forms of loyalty, support and mutual aid. The significance of kinship differs through time and space, and is complicated by the ideological aspects of kinship. However, due to the conceptualisation of the household as a bounded unit and the assumption that women are involved in the domestic domain, traditional anthropological analysis of kinship systems tends to neglect women's kinship links, as well as their non-kin networks outside the household. Consequently, the extent to which women use kinship and non-kinship links to gain access to resources outside the household is obscured.

In fact, women's esteem and influence within a community tend to be closely associated with the extent to which they participate in extra-domestic organisations, particularly kinship networks. In addition, it is noted in a substantial proportion of the case studies of development projects that investment in extra-household associations and networks is crucial to poorer women for two reasons. Firstly, poor women tend to be the most deprived of access to state and market mechanisms of resource distribution. Secondly, community participation renders women intangible resources, including bargaining power within their households (Kabeer, 1994: 288 - 289).

Ram (1991) points out that Mukkuvar women's networks of informal credit are parallel and complementary to men's fishing economy. Women's obscure and private credit transactions are based on networks of neighbourhood, residence and kinship. The networks are strengthened when marriage and residential ties overlap. The way women undertake financial transactions through social and ritual bonds which are established through marriage, work, neighbourhood and fictitious kin relationships are vital to the daily and seasonal survival of households.

Similarly, in rural Bangladesh, due to the exclusion of women from direct access to major material resources, their relationships with family members as well as with other women are one of their most significant social resources, as mutual help among women is crucial to their everyday management of the household (White, 1992 ; 89 - 91). A number of studies of urban households in America (Rapp, 1991) and Mexico (Beneria and Roldan, 1987; Lomnitz and Perz-Lizaur, 1991) also note that kinship networks are an important part of women's daily lives.

In Ban Khao Bua, where bilateral kinship networks remain predominant, it is necessary to investigate the extent to which women employ kinship and other extra-household networks to gain access to resources for their own as well as their households' interests in the changing village context. Furthermore, the framework also includes the nature of women's work, which is of significance in building up social resources for themselves and their families.

- *Household service work/family status production work*

In addition to financial and domestic inputs, the maintenance of households also requires social inputs derived from "family status production work", which is significant for the class position of households (Sharma, 1984). According to Papanek (1979; 1990), who introduced this concept, status production refers to the latent meaning of work, and can be of use as an analytic construct in the understanding of women's and men's work in the family context. The work includes women's unpaid assistance in the work of earning men, or unpaid social mobility efforts, such as direct "status politics" in the community; and performance of religious rituals associated with family status in the community. Status-production work is a part of the social mobility process of the family or household unit, it is an option rather than a necessity for survival, and is undertaken only by those of certain class or income levels with sufficient control over scarce resources for family survival.

However, drawing on her research on urban households in Himachal Pradesh in India, Sharma (1984) argues that status production work is equally important for both low-income and educated, wealthy households, though the category of work can be different

according to classes of women and social contexts. In fact, poor women have to work harder on retaining and increasing their relatively low levels of status.

Subsequently, Sharma (1986) substitutes the term "household service work" for the concept, as her research findings in Shimla, North India, show that women's work can help to maintain the class position of a household as well as further the formation of status groups within a class. The concept of household service work can be applied to situations where the household is a significant and relatively persistent unit of organisation with a certain level of security. Women play a key role in constructing networks of neighbours and kin, as well as patrons, which also contribute to their household welfare. Although they establish the relationships in their own right, they also co-operate in servicing their husbands' networks.

The analysis in chapters 6 and 7 shall specify the strategies, particularly household service work, which women in Ban Khao Bua utilise via their social resources of kinship and extra-household networks for their own and their families' benefits.

3. 4. 2. Gender ideologies

As Afshar and Agarwal (1987) note, gender ideologies are not only constraining but also enabling factors for women. This section discusses the extent to which women make room for manoeuvre within particular dominant gender ideologies.

In the case of Mukkuvar women, despite being constrained by cultural constructions of domesticity, women can enjoy a significant degree of freedom of movement as long as they adhere to the domestic definition of their role, as the domestic sphere is fluid and extended in its boundaries. As mentioned above, Mukkuvar women also build up credit networks by utilising their limited resources (Ram, 1991). In the same way, the various strategies which women in Kumirpur village employ to manipulate their social relationships under the veil of the feminine ideal of dependence are of significance to their position in the household (White, 1991).

As is mentioned in Chapter 2, Thai women are culturally assigned the roles of dutiful daughters and nurturing mothers in the household and Buddhist practices. It is important to investigate the extent to which women employ these gender ideologies, particularly their social identities, as resources.

In summary, the analytical framework to be employed incorporates the extent to which women in Ban Khao Bua utilise kinship and extra-household networks and gender ideologies as resources in the changing village and household contexts. The relationship between individual women's and households' resources is also examined.

Conclusion

The notion of the "high status" of Southeast Asian women is based on a number of concepts, including bilateral kinship networks, women's control over family money, the integration of production and reproduction work in the home, as well as historical, economic and geographical characteristics of particular areas. However, modernisation, industrialisation, and the development process have transformed the equalities and complementarity of traditional gender-relations, though the extent of these changes varies with locality. Thus, the study of transformation in Ban Khao Bua requires a contextualised framework of analysis.

Household and family in Thai society, including Ban Khao Bua, tend to overlap, the family referring to three (or more) generations of extended family members as well as relatives. A Household Resource Profile Approach, the conceptual framework set out for two inter-related units of analysis, including households and women in the households, is derived from a review of perspectives on the dynamics of Third World household livelihoods. Based on the specific natural resource base as a major source of their livelihoods within a community context, which is impacted by the interplay of the state and the market, the household is a unit where its members endeavour to utilise different material, social, cultural, and human resources for the maintenance and advancement of the whole domestic organisation.

However, the household is not a unified unit of production and consumption. Inequalities in access to and control over resources, as well as the distribution of welfare, are mediated and reproduced by social constructions. According to a review of the literature on the relationship between environmental, social and economic changes and the position of women in different Third World societies, gender and class inequalities tend to be reinforced and exacerbated by the changes. Consequently, the framework incorporates gender ideologies, inter-related issues of intra-household gender relations, including the gender/sexual division of labour, power relations and the allocation of household resources.

The extent to which cultural constructions of femininity demarcate women's social space and responsibilities, as well as exclude them from major resources, varies between societies. The analytical framework focuses on the relationship between changes at the household and village levels and gender ideologies, including women's social identities as dutiful daughters and nurturing mothers.

As production and reproduction in most rural Southeast Asian communities, including Ban Khao Bua, are mainly based on the household, the concept of gender/sexual division of labour is based on the integration of both components and cultural constructions.

The investigation of power relations in the households, particularly between wives and husbands, encompasses different aspects of the multi-dimensional concept of power, namely control over surplus resources, decision- and non-decision-making, shaped perceptions, and the actor-oriented perspective on power. The framework includes the extent to which power relations are outcomes of the interplay of economic relations and gender ideologies.

The recognition of the predominant role of women in keeping and managing family money necessitates investigation of control over different points of money flow in the family, as well as the relationship between women's money management and power as well as gender ideologies.

Finally, regardless of the subordinate position of women, the extent to which women utilise their limited resources or "patriarchal bargains" to make room for manoeuvre is remarkable. Thus, the study of women in Ban Khao Bua, where bilateral kinship networks are significant to the village way of life, focuses on the ways women utilise kinship and extra-household networks, together with gender ideologies, particularly their social identities, for their own and their families' benefits. The relationship between individual women's and their households' resources is also examined.

In summary, the analysis of how changes at the household and village levels are related to the position of women in different social and age groups in chapters 6 and 7 is based on the above-mentioned conceptual tools.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

This chapter elaborates the process of ethnographic data collection used, which entails procedures for selecting a fieldwork site and conducting my fieldwork, as well as the writing-up process. A discussion of methodological issues is also incorporated.

My 15 month fieldwork was divided into two phases during 1996 - 1998. The first period of fieldwork was conducted in late 1996 as part of my MPhil/PhD and MSc in Social Research. My second research project, a piece of qualitative research, was undertaken as part of my PhD research. The outcome of my first three-months of fieldwork, the qualitative research project for my MSc in Social Research, significantly contributed to my second period of fieldwork which was completed within 12 months (September 1997 - August 1998).

4. 1. The First Period of Fieldwork : Village Selection

I returned to Thailand in December 1996 to spend three months selecting a village and familiarising myself with my would-be fieldwork site. My site selection was based upon a range of criteria, which were set up with a focus on the Thale Luang Basin area in Songkhla province as follows :

(1) The Subdistrict Administrative Organisation system (SAO) *[Aw baw taw]* is the most current trend in decentralisation policy, gradually implemented from 1995 to 1998 beginning with subdistricts which met the requirement of having earned an average annual income of Baht 150,000 (£ 2,500) during the last 3 years (Thaned, 1997). It is necessary to explore the extent to which village women have been related to such a

political change. Consequently, the village should be incorporated into the *Aw baw taw* system.

(2) The village is outside the district town, but was moderately accessible.

(3) The village, like most Thai rural communities, is not influenced by NGOs' project implementation.

(4) The village should be composed of not more than 100 households, as it would be of manageable size for conducting fieldwork, as well as a household census on all households, without the use of a research assistant.

The process and outcome of the village selection is chronologically elaborated through the following three steps. It should be noted that all of the names of villages and people are fictitious.

4. 1. 1. Making the connections (December 1996 - January 1997)

When I began searching for information regarding the potential villages, I was assisted by a student whom I taught two years previously, Mrs. Kanjana. She was a Senior Official of a district public health office, and her husband was Deputy Director of the Provincial Public Health Office. She made connections with the Public Health Officials and arranged appointments with the Heads of the District Public Health Offices in three districts : Singha Nakorn, Ranoad, and Krasae Sin (Map 1). After explaining my research plan and my criteria for village selection to the Public Health Office Heads, they recommended specific villages and introduced me to the Chief of the Local Public Health Station. Consequently, the local officials helped introduce me to village leaders, including the Village Headman *[Phuyai ban]* and Village Public Health Volunteers (VPHVs) *[Aw saw maw]* , who played a significant role in getting me into the villages.

My status as a lecturer at the Prince of Songkla University, the most well-known university in the Southern region, contributed to my interaction with the district-level officials, as was the fact that I was Kanjana's former teacher. Support of the village-

level officials, which included accommodation and use of an office motorcycle, was the result of an endorsement by their superiors. Nevertheless, breaking through the barrier between the villagers and me still consumed a great deal of my time and effort.

4. 1. 2. Entering the villages (January 1997)

This section describes how I got access to three villages in the three districts. In spite of similar lines of enquiry, the approach I took to gain access to each village in the three districts was substantially different as a result of a combination of the level of support given by the village-level officials and their individual situations. This also influenced my final decision regarding village selection.

(a) Ban Din Daeng, Kuan Niang District

Initially, I went to see the Head of Singha Nakorn Public Health Office with the intention to visit some areas of the district. After clarifying my criteria for village selection, I was told that all villages on the Lake Basin area were not yet included in the *Aw baw taw* system. However, the Head was too kind to disappoint me. He then drove me to Ban Din Daeng public health station in Kuan Niang district from which he had been transferred just a few months before where I was introduced to three local officials at the station. I decided to come back to this village again to see the Village Headman *[Phuyai ban]*, as he was not at home on that day.

Unfortunately, on my second visit the Chief of the station was away for work, so the only available official took me to the *Phuyai ban'* s house. After introducing me briefly to the sick *Phuyai ban,* who had to be woken up for my visit, she went back to take care of the station. I told the *Phuyai ban* about my research topic and my intention for this visit. After a short while, his wife came back home and we talked in a more relaxed way for a while. Thereafter, I left a message for the Chief that I would like her to help me find a place to stay overnight in the village. Although she allowed me to stay in a vacant office house, it was unlikely I would get any insight into the village by staying on my own. Nevertheless, it took her a few weeks to find a place for me. Meanwhile, I was informed that one of my former students, Miss Nipa, was doing her field research in

the village, and her aunt's family also lived there. Hence, a week later Nipa and I went to stay overnight with the family.

On my third trip the Chief was not in the station. I was told that she had finally arranged a house for me, though it was located a distance from the other houses. It was available because one of the two adult owners often went on business to Bangkok. Nipa and I walked along the road side and talked to a number of villagers. We chatted with Nipa's aunt and uncle in the evening about the village situation. We met the *Phuyai ban* and his wife briefly in the next morning when they walked back from the temple. I found that it was difficult to talk to the villagers without being introduced by an "insider". The feeling became stronger when I compared this trip to those to the other two villages which I visited later.

(b) Ban Hua Hin, Ranoad district

I had initially arranged to see Mrs. Pranom, who was the wife of the Head of Ranoad Public Health Office and also a high-ranking official in the office. She then took me to see her husband. When I told them about my criteria for village selection, they recommended Ban Hua Hin.

A week later, when I went to the district office again, the Head drove me into the village where three female officials were busy working for the village children along side a number of Village Public Health Volunteers (VPHVs) *[Aw saw maw]* where I was introduced to all of them. One particularly friendly middle-aged woman, Mrs. Kaew was the wife of the Assistant Village Headman *[Phuchuay phuyai ban],* enthusiastically invited me to her house when I told her that I would return to the village on the next day. That night I stayed with two young female officials in a office house about 7 miles from the village.

The next morning I rode the office motorcycle to the village on my own. Kaew was already waiting for me when I arrived. She took me around the village to visit a number of women in their houses, and the villagers were very friendly to me. Before I left, I

asked her about getting a place to stay overnight in the village. She did not hesitate to offer her house, and I felt comfortable to accept her kindness.

A week later I went directly from Hat Yai to Kaew's house. That night four women came to visit me on Kaew's invitation. The next morning Kaew was busy running the small family rice mill, but she asked another woman to take me around the village, though I insisted that I felt familiar enough to walk on my own. She convinced me that it was always better for me to be accompanied by a villager. Comparing this trip to the one in Ban Din Daeng, I realised that her thoughtful support was very helpful to me.

(c) Ban Khao Bua, Krasae Sin district

The idea of visiting Krasae Sin came to mind when I heard that villagers in Koh Yai subdistrict *[Tambon]* in Krasae Sin earned their living by various occupations, including fishing and rubber cultivation. Hence, I had my third appointment with the Head of the Public Health District Office. At the office I met four male officials, including the Head of the Krasae Sin Public Health Office, and Thana, the Chief of the Village-level Public Health Station, who was told to come to meet me. After the discussion, Thana finally recommended Ban Khao Bua to me.

Thereafter, the Head of the District Office drove me to a station located in another village about 6 miles from Ban Khao Bua where I was introduced to another three local officials. Thana, the 42-year-old chief of the station, was both born in and married a girl from the area. He, as well as the head of the district office, had just been transferred to the area. After the meeting I arranged to visit the village and to stay overnight with a female official in the office house.

A few days later I went to the Public Health Station again for a longer stay. I was introduced to Mr. Chin, the *Phuyai ban* of Ban Khao Bua, who had been elected in August 1996 after the former *Phuyai ban* retired. In the afternoon I rode the office motorcycle to the village and talked to a few villagers. The next day I attended a meeting of the Village Public Health Volunteers (VPHVs) *[Aw saw maw]* convened by

the Head of the District Public Health Office in the Centre for Village Public Health Service (CVPHS). The Head informed the *Aw saw maw* of the required preparation for an upcoming visit of high-ranking officials. Thereafter, I was introduced to the *Aw saw maw* by the Head who emphasised that he hoped that they would warmly welcome me. I also met Mr. Lop, the former *Phuyai ban* who came to observe the meeting.

In the evening Thana told me that the Head had already discussed with him how to support me, provided that I decided to select this village as my research site. They expected that I would be helpful to their public health projects. He promised to help look for accommodation for me when I told him that I would prefer to live in the village rather than the office house. Nevertheless, I insisted that I would have to take all the information of three villages I visited into consideration and consult my supervisor before making a decision.

4. 1. 3. Making a decision (February 1997)

> "..There was no such thing as a representative or typical village in a vacuum. Representativeness or typicality was determined by the purpose of the study..."
>
> (Seshaiah, 1979 : 236)

In my case, the decision was based upon not only the diversity of women's active involvement in income-earning activities, which was closely related to my research objectives, but also upon the co-operation that could be expected in conducting a long-term, in-depth study of a number of households. Having finished all the trips to the three villages, I finally made a decision by taking into account four factors which are prioritised as follows:

(1) Variation of women's occupations

Women in Ban Khao Bua were key actors in different kinds of occupation, including making rubber-sheets and growing rice. Their long-standing responsibilities for selling

betel nuts and coconuts as well as making thatches from nippa palm leaves were also remarkable. Whereas most villagers of Ban Din Daeng relied only on fishing, and the primary source of income for most households in Ban Hua Hin was rice farming. One of my research objectives is to investigate the extent to which women's uses of natural resource base has been related to social, economic and environmental changes. In this respect, Ban Khao Bua was the most appropriate village, as its women's sources of income are based on a variety of natural resources.

(2) Women's involvement in development projects

The extent of village women's involvement in development activities is another criterion, as one of my research objectives is to study how women have responded to the implementation of development policy. The Ban Khao Bua's *Kloom aw saw maw*, comprising ten women and one man, was very well-known for its outstanding public performance. The Village Housewives' Group *[Kloom maeban]* in Ban Din Daeng was active in village- and district-level social functions, whereas there was no active women's group in Ban Hua Hin.

(3) Possibility of getting village co-operation

The in-depth study of women's life histories and their family situations requires the long-term co-operation of the women, which is based on their trust in the researcher. Due to my different approaches towards entering the villages, the possibility of getting village co-operation was accordingly differentiated into three levels. Due to my tenuous links to Ban Din Daeng, there would be only a minimal chance of getting adequate support from the officials and village leaders, unless I put further effort into making direct contact with the Head of Kuan Niang Public Health Office. To an extent, Ban Hua Hin was far better in this sense due to my greater familiarity with the villagers. Moreover, according to my field experience, I realised that I needed to play a particular role in order to be able to closely interact with the villagers. In this respect, Ban Khao Bua was the most appropriate choice of village because it would be possible for me to play a supportive role to the Public Health Officials whose responsibilities, unlike those

of other government officials, would scarcely create conflicts of interest with the villagers.

(4) Village size

According to the final criterion of selecting a village of not more than 100 households, Ban Din Daeng was too small with its 60 households, whereas the 130 households in Ban Hua Hin was too large to handle. Ban Khao Bua had the most appropriate size, even though its 84 households was slightly too small.

Taking these four factors into consideration and consulting my supervisor, I eventually decided to select Ban Khao Bua in Koh Yai subdistrict, Krasae Sin district, Songkhla to be my PhD research site. In this respect, my account can be related to other researchers' fieldwork experiences. For example, Srinivas et al. (1979) suggest that fieldworkers could do best to keep an open mind about the criteria of choice as they go along by trial and error until they hit upon a field site where they expect co-operation.

In other words, selecting "the village" for a qualitative researcher is not simply a matter of walking into a number of villages with a set of guideline and finally discovering a site which seems to meet the selection criteria. On the contrary, the process and outcome of village selection were socially constructed by different interactions between the researchers and the people concerned. In my case, it was an interactive and negotiative process based on my own expectations, background status and connections with different groups of people including the district- and local-level officials and the village leaders. The diversity of support I gained from the Public Health Officials, as well as the timing of my visits, significantly differentiated the approaches used to gain entry into the three villages in three districts.

After making the decision, I went to stay in the village for two weeks. After discussions with a few village leaders, Thana gave me three choices of potential home-stay families: Lop, the former *Phuyai ban*'s family, a divorced woman whose teenage son was studying in another province, and a vacant house. With an aim to gain most information

from my daily activities, I decided not to stay on my own. I did not choose to stay with the divorced woman because her house was located a distance from most houses. Staying with Lop's family would benefit me in terms of gaining information concerning village development projects, as Lop and his kin group played a key role in the Village's Savings Group and other village activities. In fact, I was also aware that to an extent, staying with one of the wealthiest and most powerful families in the village would constrain my rapport with poor or disadvantaged villagers. However, I planned to employ a variety of strategies to familiarise myself with other villagers. Consequently, after weighing the potential gains and losses up, I decided to stay with Lop's family.

In conclusion, information I gained during my two weeks in the village was of significance to my research project and preparation for my second period of fieldwork. Thereafter, I left Thailand for Bath for seven months to finish the first year of my PhD.

4. 2. The Initial Stage of My Second Fieldwork Period

In September 1997 I returned to Thailand to begin my fieldwork. My first visit to the village was to catch up with the current situation. In my second visit, I got to know more villagers by taking part in the annual *Duen Sib* (the tenth month) ceremony in the village temple. The ceremony is a unique Buddhist function organized only in the Southern region to make merit for ancestral and wandering spirits. Most non-resident household members usually return home for the ceremony to pay respect to their forefathers.

The methodological procedures, which were undertaken during September 1997 - August 1998, and relevant issues are described below.

4. 2. 1. Selecting household case-studies

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the conceptual framework of my study incorporates the Household Resource Profile Approach. The study investigates changes in a number of households in relation to their material, social, human and cultural resources, as well as the natural resource base, which have been impacted by the development process. The

process of selecting household case-studies also enabled me to obtain basic information concerning household resource profiles, which was of significance in the following stages of data collection. The household case-study selection was ultimately based on the result of wealth ranking, together with the criteria for case-study selection associated with my research objectives.

(a) Household census

In October 1997 when I became confident about most villagers' familiarity with me, I conducted a household census on my own, spending two weeks visiting 82 households, missing out two absent households. According to their neighbours and my home-stay family, all members in one household usually worked as wage labourers elsewhere. An old widow, the only member of the other household, often left the village to stay with her children. The process was an opportunity for me to learn about the households and their kinship relations.

The objective of the household census was to gather information regarding the household compositions, sources of income, rice farming history, land and asset ownership, and public participation of the households (Appendix I). A summary of the census outcomes is given in Chapter 5. Households which still grew rice and no longer did were identified, and some of them were included into the study in order to investigate particular changing trends and the impacts on their household's livelihoods. Information on households' sources of income, women's familial positions and public involvement was of use in the final stage of selection. Household differentiation was based on the data on households' ownership of material resources.

Initially, it was planned that household differentiation would be based on the combination of asset scores and levels of land ownership. But the distribution of asset scores was so substantially skewed that 87 % of households were lumped into two lower groups of 0-5 and 6-10 scores, whereas the other 13 % were distributed into the higher groups of 11 - 15 and more than 16 scores. It was sometimes awkward to give a fifteen-year-old colour television or refrigerator or a motorcycle the same scores as the

quite new ones. Consequently, a breakdown of village households was based on the size of land ownership, as ownership of land is substantially important in Thai village society (Potter, 1976). However, Howes' (1981: 45) argument is applicable to the Thai changing village context. It is unlikely to take land as the only means of production, as other means of production, including access to non-agricultural employment opportunities, the polarising influence of money lending; and the possibilities for accumulation in the sphere of exchange, also significantly contribute to households' livelihoods and well-being. Consequently, a wealth-ranking method was employed to classify households into social groups.

(b) Wealth ranking

A wealth-ranking method is one of the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) methods. Drawing from wealth-ranking experiences of development workers and field researchers in Third World countries, Chambers (1997: 178) concludes that local people's assessment of wealth and well-being are more multidimensional, knowledgeable and nuanced than outsiders' surveys, which tend to miss or misinterpret major elements in wealth and income.

In late October 1997 I conducted a wealth ranking through discussions with five villagers who played an active role in village activities at the Centre for the Village Public Health Service. In addition to their significant involvement in village projects, their familiarity with me ensured their co-operation. However, only three persons were able to turn up. The only man was Lop, a 61-years-old retired village headman whose family I stayed with. He had been *Phuyai ban* for 15 years and still played a role in the Village Savings Group *[Kloom omsub]*, A 48-years-old woman, Kua, had played a leading role in the *Kloom aw saw maw* and other village activities for a long time. The other 34-years-old woman was an active *Aw saw maw* responsible for the group's paperwork, due to her relatively high educational background. Both women were committee members of the *Kloom omsub*, and were consistently involved with the annual household survey of living conditions and income for the local public health station. All of them showed great enthusiasm in their participation.

After repeating the objectives of the meeting, I asked them to differentiate all households into levels according to their wealth. They agreed to rank the households into four social groups: low, lower-middle, higher-middle, and high groups. Thereafter, I showed them cards with names of household head and his/her spouse to them. They discussed and ranked each household into one group and gave specific reasons for their discussion. Particular arising disagreements were extensively discussed, and finally negotiated with consensus. It is noted that the results of the wealth ranking and household census are quite different as it is shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 The differences between the results of the wealth-ranking and the levels of land ownership

Social group	**Wealth ranking**	**Differentiation of land ownership**	**Overlapping of wealth ranking and land ownership results**
Low group	13	20	7
Lower-middle group	30	27	12
Higher-middle group	30	25	13
High group	9	10	3

Source Wealth ranking and household census

It is obvious that a few households are included into both classifications, whereas a larger number of them are not. The informants were asked to clarify their ranking reasons, which are summarised below.

In spite of a relatively large area of land ownership, some households were ranked in lower social groups than in my classification. This was because wives or mothers in these households were single breadwinner, as their husbands and/or sons, who were

frequent drinkers or gamblers, were unreliable. Additionally, a number of households had the burden of children's high educational expenditures. A few households were heavily indebted.

A number of households were ranked in higher social groups than in my classification despite their limited land ownership, and because of regular remittances from their children. A few households earned their living from other sources of income than land. Some households who have few children did not have any financial burden.

In other words, the wealth ranking was of significance in household classification, as it incorporated informants' knowledge regarding households' different types of resources which was beyond an outsider's accessibility.

(c) Case studies

The selection of the case studies was based on the criteria which were translated from the conceptual framework as follows :

(1) The study focuses on women who have established familial positions as wives and mothers over a significant period of the family life cycle. Therefore, the households should comprise women married for more than 15 years and other family members, not merely the couple themselves.

(2) The research objective is to investigate the extent to which women's uses of their social resources, their involvement in the implementation of development policy, as well as their various familial positions, has been related to social, economic and environmental changes, together with the dynamics of household resource profiles. Thus, household resource profiles, including kinship networks and sources of income, as well as women's public participation, and their positions in the family cycle, as mothers-in-law and/or grandmothers, were taken into account.

Initially, the selection of the case-studies was based on the overlapping households that are categorised in the same social groups by both the household census and the wealth

ranking methods. However, too few households were selected as a result of this process. Therefore, households categorised according to the wealth ranking alone were used, as this method was considered the most reliable. The number of households selected in each social group was proportional to the total number in each group.

Table 4.2 Number of household case-studies selected from two results

Social group	Case-study from the overlapping results	Case-study from the wealth ranking result	Total number of case-studies
Low group	2	2	4
Lower-middle group	5	3	8
Higher-middle group	4	3	7 + 1
High group	1	2	3

Source Outcomes of the household census and wealth ranking

In addition, two households with female household heads were included in the lower-middle group. One 43-year-old woman whose household was ranked in the higher-middle group showed her enthusiasm to take part in my research. As her life story was particularly interesting, I decided to include her as a case-study. As such, the total number of my household case-studies was twenty-three.

(d)Additional input into wealth ranking

With awareness that my first wealth ranking conducted by three informants could be flawed, I gained additional input from two informants. In February 1998 I asked two villagers, one at a time, to classify each household into four social groups. The first informant was Mr. Chan, a most respected 84-year-old elder and long-standing traditional medical healer. An old man from a poor household also joined us in the process. The other informant was On, the Assistant Village Headman's *[Phuchuay phuyai ban]* wife, who was born in the village and owned a small grocery for more than 10 years.

In conclusion, eighty per cent of the outcome from both informants was the same. Chan's classification exactly matched the previous wealth ranking result, whereas On lumped four households, two from both the lower-middle and high-middle groups, into the higher-middle group.

4. 2. 2. Approaching the case-studies: my good but naive intention

In late October 1997, after selecting the household case-studies, I approached each individual woman asking for her co-operation. Most of them gave me permissions without any hesitation. I also informed her of a gift, which I would arrange via the Village Savings and Stainless Kitchenware Group and the Village Savings Group *[Kloom omsub]*, to express my appreciation for her co-operation. I allocated half of my research fund provided by my university (Baht 20,000) (£ 333) to the *Kloom omsub* with which to earn monthly interest of Baht 400 (£ 6.8). The money was to be spent on stainless kitchenware from the Village Stainless Kitchenware Group to be given to each case-study. Unexpectedly, such a plan caused a high degree of jealousy and disappointment for some households not selected as my case-studies. I had to readjust my plan to provide the gift for every household, one by one on a monthly basis. At the end of 1997, before the controversy could cause more problems, I took an opportunity to explain my plan in the *Kloom omsub's* annual meeting. Although it would take about 7 years for all households to gain the gift, most villagers seemed contented. This experience reminded me that, "..the issue of compensation is as complex as any in fieldwork..." (Devereux and Hoddinott, 1992: 22)

4. 3. The Dynamics of "Data" Collection

Similar to my first fieldwork process, my second one was carried out through dynamic processes of negotiations and interactions between the villagers and myself in different socially- and culturally-constructed contexts. This section discusses particular strategies I learned to "enrol the others into my own "project" (cf. Long, 1992) in order to obtain the "data", as well as constraints caused by my own limitations and other social factors.

4. 3. 1. Dealing with village politics

Since the first fieldwork period, I came to learn about village factions caused by two elections of the *Phuyai ban* and the Member of Parliament in 1996. Chin, the current *Phuyai ban*, competed with two other candidates: Lop's 32-year-old relative, and Somchai, the 52-year-old *Phuchuay phuyai ban,* of almost twenty years. It was alleged that Chin overcame Somchai because he registered a number of outsiders to vote for him. However, according to villagers, all the candidate bought votes, as the competition was extremely heated. Consequently, the villagers were unprecedentedly divided into three factions as a result of the elections, kinship networks, and household locations.

With great awareness of my involvement in Lop's faction by staying in his house, I made efforts into familiarising myself with Chin and his factional members. However, as a woman, the circumstances in which I could interact with him and most men were limited. I was unable to employ the "male strategy" of joining their drinking or gambling groups. It was not until December 1997 that a number of women in Chin's faction became comfortable enough to tell me their versions of the village conflicts.

Furthermore, in order to familiarise myself with Somchai, the *Phuchuay phuyai ban*, who was also a traditional masseur, I asked to learn massage with him. The strategy was effective in many ways. My massage teacher gradually revealed in-depth information and his views regarding village situations to me. I took the opportunity of practising daily massage to visit his house, a small grocery run by his wife and mother-in-law located at the other end of the village far from my homestay family, and talked to villagers. Practising my massage with my case-studies was of use in terms of developing a closer relationship between us. In addition, most villagers, including Chan, Somchai's massage teacher, were impressed with my enthusiasm. Such positive attitudes increased their co-operative attitudes towards me.

4. 3. 2. Gathering the "data"

This section illustrates a series of research methods and their limitations, some of which were socially- and culturally-constructed by my personal background.

(a) Participation in activities with women

According to Reinharz (1992), methodological literature about participant observation indicates a dichotomy or continuum of "complete observer" to "complete participant" roles. The two variables in this continuum include the extent to which those observed know they are studied, and how much the researcher participates in the ongoing activities. On the one hand, my fieldwork role could be considered complete participation, as I took part in almost all village activities, including religious and merit-making ceremonies, funerals, wedding parties, and ordinations. On the other hand, I also agree with Sharma (1986: 33) that an anthropologist cannot participate fully in a rural society as she never relies entirely on agricultural production for a living like most villagers. Nevertheless, my participation brought significant insights into the concept of gender relations in local contexts. In particular, joining in a village folk dance group *[klong yaaw]* as a general assistant was an effective strategy to familiarise myself with female dancers and male musicians. The *klong yaaw* group performed in the processions of district-level ceremonies and social functions. Accompanying the group enabled me to keep a low profile as an observer in most ceremonies, especially the ones organised by the district authorities. In addition, I took part in daily and seasonal income-earning activities in which women, the poor in particular, were actively involved. It was from such close involvement that I gradually developed friendships with some women and obtained "hidden" information at the household and village levels.

(b) Interviewing the "case-studies"

My interviews with the women varied according to the different contexts. A series of 8 - 10 interviews was conducted with each woman. I learned to avoid interviewing the women in the presence of their husbands, as to an extent most women became concerned about their men's reactions to their answers or our discussions, particularly

when the topics were related to their families and the men themselves. Interviewing women while they were sitting with their female friends and relatives was also productive, as the discussions became more extensive and dynamic with inputs from the group. Furthermore, the interview outcomes were associated with the women's moods, which were primarily related to their family situations. Consequently, multiple interviews were of use to validate specific information, particularly the women's perceptions of their household situations. As Reinharz (1992) indicates, multiple interviews provide opportunities for the researcher to see how the thoughts of the researched are situated in particular circumstances as times passes.

Unavoidably, I encountered constraints concerning the issue of wives' sexual compliance to their husbands, a potential indicator of women' s subordination. The difficulty in discussing this issue was not only that sexuality is culturally a hidden issue, especially for women, but it was also difficult for me as a single woman to raise such a topic with the women. Nevertheless, I added it into my final interview by asking the women to respond to a case of Western wife who sued her husband for forcing her to sleep with him. However, the extent to which their stammering responses were related to their own circumstances was tenuous.

(c) Focus group discussions

The complication and dynamics of group discussions became clear to me in a series of focus group discussions. In December 1997 when eight women and I were unexpectedly held in the Village Public Health Service Centre by heavy rain, I improvised a small group discussion concerning women's perceptions of their own capabilities and village changes. The atmosphere was relaxed, though I had to constantly draw the discussion back to the agenda after periods of distraction. As the discussion went on, I was surprised to find contradictory responses to the issue of women's incapability. In the first discussion, all participants agreed that they could do almost everything as men did, except climbing up coconut and betel-nut trees. Subsequently, after discussing other topics, a woman unintentionally brought the issue back into the conversation again. The group admitted that although some of them were attending workshop courses regarding public speech, they felt difficulty in speaking in public. Finally, they unanimously concluded that women were mentally and physically

weaker than men, and female *Phuyai ban* would not be able to work as proficiently as male ones.

Subsequently, two focus group discussions were conducted on two evenings in April 1998 at the Village Public Health Service Centre (VPHSC). All women were divided into two focus groups: the first group was composed of women in the high and higher-middle groups, and the second one of those in the low and lower-middle groups. Three women missed out, as they were away. I asked a Public Health Officer who worked in Koh Yai for 12 years to help me facilitate the discussions, due to her facilitation skills and familiarity with local villagers. The discussion topics included women's perceptions of village changes and development projects, impact of the changes and the projects on themselves and their families, their expectations of future village changes, as well as their limitations, rights and duties as women. The outcomes of the discussions are incorporated in the following chapters.

The atmosphere in the two groups was quite different. Only a few women played an active role in the discussions. Although most participants seemed relaxed, they were inclined to speak only when directly asked. I was quite disappointed that in the first group one woman obviously kept quiet. Thereafter, she told me about her conflicts with a few of the other participants. The second group expressed a wider range of expectations about village changes. Nevertheless, two participants told me later that although they disagreed with one participant's idea of having a village running water system, they did not want to show their disagreements. A few women also confessed that they did not want to share their ideas because other participants, particularly the *Aw saw maw*, seemed more knowledgeable and articulate. Due to Thai culture, it is considered inappropriate and unwise to express one's disagreement in public, particularly when one wants to maintain social relations or considers oneself inferior to one's counterpart. In other words, it is necessary that the focus group discussion method be employed with great caution of particular cultural factors in the Thai social context.

In summary, in spite of conducting fieldwork in my own society, to a great extent my fieldwork experience was not different from those of many fieldworkers. I shared with them some degree of discomfort by virtue of having an "odd", "strange", or "marginal" position in fieldwork sites. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), an ethnographer's "dysadaptation syndrome" includes a wide range of feelings, including incompetence, fear, anger and frustration. It is theoretically crucial that an ethnographer avoid feeling "at home". When she loses all sense of being a stranger, her critical and analytical perspective may also disappear. Thus she should constantly stay alert for any research possibilities from any social situations. However, it is undeniable that there are many occasions when one needs to engage in social interaction for primarily social and pragmatic reasons, rather than for research interests and strategies (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).

4. 4. Methodological and Ethical Complications

This section discusses a number of methodological complications, as well as ethical concerns, which I encountered in the fieldwork process, and my "coping" strategies.

4. 4. 1. Personal values and standpoint : potential controversies

With respect to my personal values, particularly feminist and political standpoints, the following 'problematic' periods of frustration emerged when the fine line between my roles as a fieldwork researcher and a feminist/political activist became ambiguous.

(a) Feminist stance

In conversations when women and male village leaders discussed women's limited capabilities, they asked me to share my opinions. I had to remind myself of my role as a researcher, to facilitate the villagers to discuss their ideas freely without being intimidated or dominated by my inputs. Whenever I had to share my views, I was careful to ensure a balance of indicating social and structural hindrances to women's

development without causing disagreements and widening the gap between me and the villagers, particularly on issues of gender inequalities.

(b) Political standpoint

During my first fieldwork, I made great efforts into avoiding commenting on the Democrat Party, the key political party in the current coalition government, as I realised that most Southerners tended to have extreme faith in the party. Nevertheless, after lending my favourite weekly political magazine, as well as other books, to Lop and Suthin, I noticed that they were not keen on reading them, as the magazine presented a position contradictory to the party. I finally gave up giving them the magazine for fear of causing political contradictions with my key informants.

Devereux and Hoddinott (1992) identify complex relationships in fieldwork between research and political action. That if political involvement antagonises powerful people in the village, or local officials, the professional objectives of the research may be jeopardised by the activism. In my case, the longer I stayed in the village, the more information I gathered about the corrupt behaviour of local leaders and officials. To an extent such knowledge urged me to ponder "putting the wrong right". However, I eventually came to concede to my own limitations.

In July 1998 I encountered the final challenge to my personal standpoint as an environmentalist when the Ministry of Sciences, Technology and Environment proposed a ban on shrimp farming in fresh-water areas, especially in the central region. Similar to most influential and well-to-do families in the district, my home-stay family had invested in the lucrative business in a nearby village since 1997. In addition, as one of the few families who earned a lot of money from selling soil, they consistently justified their business by telling me about contribution they made to the public from their soil quarry. During a tense week of interest groups' protests and negotiations, Lop and Jai spent most time keeping up with the news. Although I told them that only the businesses in central region would be restricted and not those in the Songkhla Lake Basin, their frustration was apparent in Lop's strong criticisms of the government policy. In the

meantime, I felt difficulty in discussing with them the environmental impact of shrimp farms, as they seemed too frustrated about their uncertain business to accept any different perspectives. But my unusual silence increased their misgiving. Consequently, I decided to leave the village for a few days to avoid any potential controversy. Fortunately, in early August 1998 when I returned to the village, the issue had been finalised with the negotiation of a 120-day permission for shrimp farms in the Central region to benefit from their final yield. However, during my last two weeks, my anxiety of causing a conflict with my home-stay family prevented me from raising the issue in our conversations and giving them relevant information to broaden their understanding. In other words, my environmental consciousness was challenged and eventually defeated.

4. 4. 2. My background and the fieldwork relationships

Sharma (1986 : 33) points out that although an anthropologist is able to create happy and intimate relationships with some villagers, there are always others whom she is separated from due to barriers of class, sex and etc. In fact, a fieldworker's initial reception by her host society is related to her culturally contextualised characteristics, namely marital status, age, physical appearance, presence and number of children, and ethnic, racial, class, or national differences as well as gender (Warren, 1988). This section discusses how my personal background, being a middle-aged, single, middle-class, highly-educated, urban female university lecturer, affected the social relations in my fieldwork.

(a) Gender

Devereux and Hoddinott' s (1992) remark that gender can be both advantageous and limiting dependent on particular circumstances is applicable in my case. It is concluded from a number of ethnographers' experiences that researchers cannot escape the implications of gender, even though variations exist in setting and are intertwined with sexual preference. Female researchers are often restricted to the domestic world of women, children, and the elders (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). My fieldwork

experience was similar to those of other female researchers, as it was much easier to gain access to women than men (Finch, 1984; Scott, 1985; Ribbens, 1989; Razavi, 1992). As Skeggs (1994) mentions, access to space is gendered; it was unlikely for me to be able to participate in male social gatherings, particularly drinking and gambling groups. Therefore, such a traditional gender-limitation was a social constraint in familiarising myself with male villagers.

Furthermore, the aspects of being a woman fieldworker are also inextricably intertwined with other aspects of their social characteristics, impacting on their interactions with women who are researched. On the one hand, a number of feminists suggest that, as women researchers share gender status and subordinate structural position with their researched women, they are able to build up a reciprocal research relationship (Oakley, 1981; Finch, 1984). On the other hand, some feminists argue that other dimensions of social relations, including class, educational and professional differences, can create potential obstacles to identification between women (Ribbens, 1989). Likewise, Reinharz (1992) concludes that feminists' access to women can be as problematic as men's to men due to differences in social class, race, ethnicity, or sexual preference. However, the researcher must overcome differences of socio-economic status, life-style, sexual identity, marital status etc. to gain access to the views of a diverse range of women. In my case, it was obvious that, to an extent, my social background limited my gaining rapport with poor women, which is discussed in the next section.

(b) Age and Marital Status

According to Warren (1988), the fieldworker's marital status is particularly significant to anthropological informants. An unmarried, childless adult woman cannot have a fully legitimate social place in most cultures. The only exception is when she is elderly and androgenised. Being a single woman in her thirties is unusual for most Thai rural people, even though it is becoming accepted in urban areas. The topic of my single status was often brought into conversations between me and village women with both a degree of disagreement or encouragement. On the other hand, as a researcher of issues concerning women's family lives, it is undeniable that my lack of marriage experience

constrained my investigation of a few relevant topics. However, as age is culturally linked with respect, relating myself to younger women as an elder sister was a useful strategy to closely associate with them.

(c) Class

Razavi's (1992) notion that in spite of working in their own rural communities, most Third World anthropologists are not complete insiders due to their different urban and middle-class backgrounds seems to apply in my case. On the one hand, I agree with her that having both perspectives, as insider and outsider, is ultimately advantageous in providing different representations of society (Razavi, 1992). On the other hand, Devereux and Hoddinott's (1992) notion that indigenous researchers may overlook important features, as respondents tend to assume that she already knows about them. In my case, although I am a Thai doing fieldwork in my own country, I always felt that I was an outsider in the communities. My strong sense of being an outsider was partly due to my class background, in addition to my urban-like appearance. As such, I felt difficulty in telling villagers about my parents' ownership of a relatively large area of rubber plot, due to my awareness of their minimal scale of land ownership. Finally, I managed to decrease the class gap between myself and the villagers by telling only some of my family background. In this respect, Ribbens' (1989) doubtful notion is taken into account. While women who are the subject of research are relating to the researcher as a whole person. I came to realise that it is difficult for her to reciprocate. In my case, I justified to myself the idea that it was necessary to minimise the sense of difference in background between myself and the villagers as much as possible, even though such a great disparity still existed and led to the ethical questions to be discussed in the next section.

4. 4. 3. Ethical concerns

According to my feminist stance, a number of ethical issues had to be taken into account in my research process, most which were based on my close and intensive relationships with women, particularly those in poor households.

Due to my fieldwork experience, I find Glucksmann's (1994) argument undeniable. Regardless of how much the researcher avoids treating the people she is researching as "objects", and no matter how "good" the rapport seems to be, the implicit fact is that those being researched are the "subjects" of the research. The development of a personal relationship between an interviewer and an interviewee is the outcome of repeated interviewing. It leads to what Oakley (1981) called a "transition to friendship". In an interview situation in which the researcher listens with care and concern the distinction between research relationship and friendship can become blurred. However, Cotterill (1992) identifies two indicators of friendship, one is having someone as a sympathetic listener to confide in, and the other is reciprocity. The researcher herself may not want reciprocally to disclose private aspects of her life to her respondents as they do to her. When a woman reveals very painful aspects of her life to another who will finally walk away from her life, there may be real potential for harm. In the same way, Finch (1984) indicates the crux of the exploitative potential emerging from the relationship established between an interviewer and her interviewee. However, Skeggs (1994) argues that it is not right always to place the researched into a victim category. According to her fieldwork experience with young white working-class women, they also enjoyed the research, as it provided them a sense of self-worth. They used the feminism of the research as a framework to explain their individual problems. Nevertheless, the involvement and intensity of ethnography potentially leads to a high degree of risk of exploitation, betrayal and abandonment of the researched by the researcher (Skeggs, 1994).

In my case, my friendship with my "case-studies" provided me with a great deal of information concerning their family lives, which by no means could be exploited or do harm to them. However, the extent to which I could reciprocally confide in them was limited.

Scott (1985) highlights significant issues concerning ethical and methodological problems in doing feminist research on women. The researcher may use other women's experience to further her own aims and careers, and her analysis tends to be unilateral. She is in the powerful position of being able to translate or present other women's lives, as well as search transcripts for quotes to underpin the development of an argument. It

is necessary for feminist researchers to engage in research with, and for, women rather than on women and to ensure that the women have an opportunity to respond to and agree with the "findings". As far as my research is concerned, at that stage it was unlikely for me to carry out such an engagement. Although I can indicate rhetorical policy implications of my research outcome regarding its contribution to the issues of women's development in Thailand, I am also wary of the social and structural hindrances to translating such a policy into implementation. In other words, irrespective of my feminist ethical concerns, the contribution of my research seems limited. Skeggs (1994) concludes that, to a great extent, feminist research should elicit and analyse knowledge to be used by women to change the oppressive and exploitative condition in their society, or at least the analysis should avoid reinscribing the researched into powerless, pathologised, without agency. In my case, my ultimate endeavour is to articulate my research into the latter category.

4. 5. My writing-up

According to Pearson (1993), conducting field research is not only about negotiating access, entering, staying in, surviving, and finally getting out more-or-less intact with a narrative, but it also entails the requirement of refashioning the fieldwork experience into a textual form, which is to be both accessible to a different audience and remains true to where it came from. In Clifford Geertz's words, "Being There" and "Being Here" is a problem of multiple identities. Similar to the fieldwork process, the period of my writing-up was another opportunity for me painstakingly to search and re-search for the "reality" of my fieldwork, as well as my various and dynamic identities, in the textualising procedure.

Holland and Ramazanoglu (1994) categorise the complexities of epistemological differences in social enquiry into three potential positions. The first position is based on the assumption that reality can be accessed through a correct technique. The connection of truth to reality is undertaken through set procedures of interpretation, a process requiring control to avoid subjective, political and personal contamination. On the

contrary, the position at the other extreme rejects the validity of women's accounts of their experience due to the assumption that people produce diverse accounts in response to specific audiences and circumstances. The middle way between both extremes is to emphasise method and methodology to clarify how the researcher comes to conclusions and the considerable difficulty in doing so. This approach is adopted by most feminists, as well as myself, with methodological variations.

Nevertheless, the assumption that some level of material reality exists in people's lives is not translated into a means of accessing such reality. Any understanding of the nature of the "real" relationship is derived from a degree of conceptualisation and some processes of interpretation of "evidence" for the existence of such relationships. Consequently, interpretations become the key to the methodological step linking data and social relationships. However, such a process can be flawed, as the researcher can never be sure that she has got it right. This is because there are no rules of validation in imposing an abstract order on the confusion and complexity of daily life. Such a flaw always lies in the tension between the vulnerability and power of any social researcher who struggles to read through her data to shape some versions of social reality behind it. According to feminist perspectives, resolution of the problem is unlikely, but necessitates some forms of openly reflexive interpretation for the researcher to claim any validity for her conclusion (Holland and Ramazanoglu, 1994).

In the same way, De Vries (1992) concludes that producing an ethnography encompasses both work in the field and afterwards. The researcher has to constantly search potentially suggestive meanings and interpretations to validate or allow a better understanding of events, contradictory accounts or alternative perspectives on prevailing or concealed issues. Although the researcher shares her experience, situations and even understandings of realities with others, she has to process her own experience as theoretically informed representations of social life. This is not only an epistemological issue, but also a practical one, as the researcher has the luxury of detaching herself from everyday life, reflecting upon experience and processing it conceptually. Consequently, the researcher becomes involved in the shaping of

particular realities. Furthermore, according to Moore (1994), it is not only her experience of an "other" culture that the researcher constitutes and produces in the text, but she also constitutes and produces her experience and herself in the text. The constitution of self is achieved symbolically through language, as well as through the mediation of the text (Moore, 1994). In other words, the researcher is also the subject in her own research, her personal history is part of the process through which "understanding" and "conclusions" are reached (Stanley and Wise, 1993).

In retrospect, being a single, middle-class, professional woman who has scarcely been socially and economically constrained in the pursuit of her life destination, gender issues were never my agenda. Despite my long-standing advocacy of political and environmental issues, it was not until the last few years that gender issues have been drawn into my academic and personal attention. My understanding of women's issues has been developed during the last few years while I was teaching and responsible for a research-cum-action project on women in fishery in fishing villages. Nevertheless, it was only during the first year of my PhD study that I began to build up my own comprehension of feminism via extensive reading materials, most of which are based upon Western perspectives, as well as the social circumstances of South Asia and Africa. Subsequently, due to my feminist preconceptions and insufficient understanding of rural Thai village contexts, my fieldwork was carried out through the turmoil of insecure feelings. In spite of basic understanding of epistemological aspects of ethnography, out of frustration with fieldwork complications, I sometimes desperately sought "the reality out there" with my positivistic subconscious. Furthermore, as a novice ethnographer, my experience of ethnographic analysis is similar to that of Skeggs (1994). While struggling to make theoretical sense of my fieldwork accounts with great concerns about my theoretical inadequacy, my insecurity led me to the safety of feminist perspectives by frantically searching for something that would seem to make sense of my empirical experience. It took me a long period to establish the combination of alternative concepts appropriate to constructing explanatory frameworks.

In other words, it is not only my fieldwork experiences but also the process of my writing-up that is crucial to the development of my self-reflection and my interpretation of women's issues in my own society.

Conclusion

This chapter discusses my ethnographic procedures for conducting two phases of fieldwork and undertaking the writing-up, focusing on methodological sequences and related complications. The processes of social inquiry were dynamic due to the degree of strategic interaction, negotiations and contradictions between myself and others, as well as among the others themselves, within different socially- and culturally-constructed contexts and constraints. Self reflection of my own subjectivity as the ethnographer, as well as my own account, is of significance to validate my interpretation of the empirical experience and "data", which I obtained from the fieldwork.

In this respect, it is concluded,

> "Entering the field, developing a place within the social order, talking, feeling, and living in the setting, are the terrain of understanding the intersection of gender, self and others in fieldwork. Writing field notes, writing essays, seeking and incorporating reviews and editing, are the terrain of understanding the web of data, self and discourse..."
>
> Warren, C. (1988 : 65)

CHAPTER FIVE

THE VILLAGE AND THE WOMEN

This chapter comprises illustrations of the village, as well as its women and their households. The first part of the chapter provides an overview description of Ban Khao Bua in Koh Yai subdistrict, Krasae Sin district in Songkhla province in terms of its physical features, historical background, population, economy, and other aspects of village life. This focuses particularly on the environmental, social and economic changes resulting from the interaction of the village, the state and the market. In addition to the incorporation of gender aspects into these issues, the second part of the chapter gives the perceptions of women regarding the impact of changes on themselves and their households. Thereafter, the final part presents a brief overview of twenty-three women case-studies and their households, as the basic elements of village evidence.

5. 1. Ban Khao Bua in Relation to Krasae Sin and Koh Yai

The village is located in the Songkhla Lake Basin (Map 2), in Koh Yai subdistrict of Krasae Sin district, in the north of Songkhla province, with an approximate distance of 100 kilometre from the provincial district. The Krasae Sin district was separated from Ranoad district, and upgraded into branch district in 1978, and has been a district since 1994, with 4 subdistricts. According to local officials, the district is grouped with the lowest ranked districts in relation to per capita income in Songkhla. According to the 1994 record of the Songkhla Provincial Revenue Office, the annual revenue from Krasae Sin district ranked lowest in Songkhla province at 0.7 million Baht, which accounted for only 0.04 % of the total provincial revenue. The low level of economic activity is evident from the small number of shops located in the district's centre. Before the only commercial bank was established in early 1998, Krasae Sin people had to travel 30 kilometres to banks in Ranoad district with which Krasae Sin has had

economic and administrative links for decades. Before roads were constructed in the 1960's and 1970's journeys such as this and to Songkhla required the time-consuming use of water transport.

Koh Yai (*Koh* means island, *Yai* means big), a subdistrict *[Tambon]* of 12.57 square kilometres in Krasae Sin district *[Amphoe]*, is a tiny peninsula in the middle lake of the three freshwater Songkhla Lakes *[Thale Luang]*. The area is located in the north of Songkhla province, a distance of 83 kilometres from the town district, and is divided from the mainland by a 5-metre-wide, man-made canal dug about one hundred years ago. Most of the land in its centre is hilly with different degrees of radial slopes into the lake. According to a number of elderly informants, the area has been inhabited for at least one hundred and fifty years when noble families from Songkhla town occupied the land by planting coconut trees in the vacant fertile land.

Unlike the other three subdistricts of Krasae Sin district, which are mainly composed of vast green plain rice fields, Koh Yai is a hilly area densely covered with rubber trees, its second most important source of income, behind fishing. According to the 1997 survey of the Koh Yai Subdistrict Health Station, a per capita income of 21,300 Baht (£ 355), ranks Ban Khao Bua as one of the slightly better-off villages in Koh Yai. The main source of this is its rubber trees and other natural resources to be discussed later. The village is accessible due to an asphalted ring road around the subdistrict, which was completed in 1997, and regular buses to Ranoad, Hat Yai, and Songkhla provincial district.

5. 2. Physical Features

Located about 15 kilometres South-west of the district centre, the Ban Khao Bua area stretches for about 1 kilometre along a curving asphalted road parallel to the lake (Map 3). According to the former Village Headman *[Phuyai ban]*, who facilitated an official land survey a few years ago, its approximate area is 1 square kilometre, and is separated from the neighbouring village by a range of hills with a peak of 300 metres above sea level. The village area includes a steep part of the western hills, which changes from rubber trees, to coconut and betel nut patches, to nippa palm plots, and to rice fields as

the hill is descended. According to a few villagers, the construction of the main laterite road along the foot of the hill in 1977 resulted in substantial lowering of the slope of the hill, making walking across the village much less difficult.

About 20 households inhabited the village in the 1920s. The village community *[Mubaan]* is different from a number of villages in Koh Yai and Thailand in the sense that its original community was formed before it was established as an administrative unit in the 1950s. In many cases, the official establishment of *Mubaan* tended to result in a lack of coincidence between social units and administrative territory (Kemp, 1991; Hirsch, 1991; Vandergeest, 1991; Shingeltomi, 1992). Since 1966, when a small narrow soil road was built, almost all households have moved from the lakeside to the roadsides. Since Krasae Sin separated from Ranoad district and was upgraded into a branch-district, the 20-kilometre peninsular ring-road around Koh Yai has been partly asphalted, and finally completed in early 1997. It was not until 1987 that the households along the roadside could enjoy a public electricity service.

5. 3. Historical Background

According to a number of senior villagers, the village was established at least 150 years ago with about five original households. During the last eighty years the coastal wetland forests were gradually cleared, the water was drained, then the land was transformed into coconut and betel nut plots, nippa palm plots and rice fields. Thereafter, the villagers relied on these agricultural resources, particularly coconuts and betel nuts, for four generations. Due to its location in the eastern coastal plain, a large number of these rice fields were occasionally flooded in rainy seasons. Nevertheless, until 10 years ago rice yields were sufficient for subsistence needs and some cash sales. In the meantime, most forest hills were occupied, cleared and replanted with potato, water melon, as well as parkia speciosa (*sataw* : a Southern wild tree with edible seeds), coconut and jackfruit trees. As a consequence, wild animals, particularly large snakes, gradually disappeared.

It is said that a local spirit in the form of a huge snake with a red crest took care of and visited the village every year. Her visit was welcome by the villagers, as the land through which she crept became increasingly fertile. However, she disappeared about fifty years ago when the forest was cleared. Consequently, the villagers set up a shrine in a concrete shelter constituting a model of young woman and a snake with a red crest. They often pay visits to the shrine to make a vow in return for fortune. Also an annual Buddhist merit-making ceremony was organised at the shrine.

In early 1960s, when a Subdistrict Chief *[Kamnan]* brought in rubber plants from Trang province, its original source in Thailand, some parts of hill area were transformed into indigenous rubber plots. Nevertheless, it was not until the 1970s that most villagers gradually turned their land into high-yielding rubber plots in accordance with government promotion policy.

5. 4. Population

According to an annual survey of households' basic necessities conducted by the Subdistrict Public Health Station in June 1997, the village comprises 86 households with 362 villagers : 194 male, 168 female. All are Buddhists.

The overview of the village households in this section is derived from my own survey of 82 households undertaken in September 1997. This was four less than the above survey as two households had already moved away, and owners of two other households were away from the village during the census period. Only one elderly woman lived in one of these households, and the other comprises four members who usually leave the village for wage employment.

5. 4. 1. Household characteristics

This section gives an overview of the household characteristics in relation to their composition, duration, origin, and age of household heads.

Table 5.1 Type of household

Type of household	**Household number**	**Per cent**
- Parents and children	33	40
- Grandparents & parents & children	29	35
- Grandparents & children	2	3
- Grandparents or parents only (with children nearby)	6	7
- Single (grand)parent without children nearby	9	11
- Others	3	4
Total number	82	100

Source Household census

Most of the households are nuclear family-based with 40 % comprising parents and children, and 35 % composed of three generations of family members. The number of parents or grandparents who live on their own is 18 %. The mean number of household members is four. Most households have a few non-resident members working or studying in Songkhla town, Hat Yai, Phuket and Bangkok.

Table 5.2 Duration of household setting in the village

Duration of household setting in the village	**Household number**	**Per cent**
- Less than 1 year	1	3
- 1 - 5 years	3	4
- 6 - 10 years	9	11
- 11 - 20 years	13	16
- 21 - 30 years	16	19
- 31 - 40 years	12	14
- 41 - 50 years	16	19
- More than 50 years	12	14
Total number	82	100

Source Household census

It is noted that almost half of the households (47 %) have been in the village more than 30 years ago. Most of the households (82 %) have been in the village for more than 20 years, and only 18 % settled in the last 10 years. That is, only a small number of the younger generation set up their own households in the village. Most of those who stay share residency with their parents.

Table 5.3 Origin of household

Origin of household	**Household number**	**Per cent**
- Husband was born in the village.	20	24
- Wife was born in the village.	51	62
- Husband & wife were born elsewhere.	5	6
- Husband & wife were born in the village.	6	8
Total number	82	100

Source Household census

Most of the households are matrilocal, as wives of 62 % of the households were born in the village in contrast to 24 % of those whose husbands are original villagers. Only 6 % of the households are migrants. As in the majority of matrilocalities, kinship relations in the village are tightly knit, as most households are related to at least a few of the others.

Table 5.4 Age of household head

Age of the household head	**Household number**	**Per cent**
- Less than 30 years old	1	2
- 31 - 35 years old	7	8
- 36 - 40 years old	12	14
- 41 - 50 years old	13	16
- 51 - 60 years old	12	14
- 61 - 70 years old	22	28
- 71 - 80 years old	10	12
- More than 80 years old	5	6
Total number	82	100

Source Household census

The respondents were asked to identify their household heads by taking his/her main responsibilities in the household into account. Most of the household heads are more than 40 years of age (76 %), whereas those who are less than 35 years of age account for only 10 %. Furthermore, it is found that 78 % of the household heads are married, 17 % are divorced and 5 % are widows. Female household heads account for only 23 % of the household heads, and 16 % of the female household heads are widows.

5. 4. 2. Ownership of assets

This section presents data concerning ownership of land and other assets upon which household differentiation is based.

Table 5.5 Differentiation of land ownership

Land ownership	Household number	Percent
- Up to 2 rai*	20	24
- 2.1 - 12 rai	27	33
- 12.1 - 25 rai	25	30
- Greater than 25 rai	10	13
Total number	82	100

Source Household census

* *Rai* is unit of land measurement officially used in Thailand. One rai is approximately 0.16 hectare.

All households own at least one plot of residential land. Households can be divided into 4 groups according to their land ownership. The mean area of land owned by the households is 12.3 rai. The maximum is 46.5 rai, while the minimum is 0.1 rai (a few households with only one plot in the residential area). Twenty-four per cent of the households own less than 2 rai of land, which usually includes residential area, and in some cases either a small betel-nut and coconut patch or a nippa palm plot. The proportion of those who own 2 -12 rai and 12 - 25 rai of land is not significantly different (33 % and 30 % respectively). Most households inherited at least half their land, including rubber plots, rice fields and betel-nut and coconut plots, from the wife's and/or husband's parents. The village is similar to most Thai villages in the sense that its inheritance of land is bilateral, as sons and daughters inherit from both father and mother (Wijeyewardene, 1967; Rabibhadana, 1984).

Table 5.6 Asset point

Asset point	**Household number**	**Per cent**
- 0 – 5	33	39
- 6 – 10	40	48
- 11 - 15	7	8
- More than 15	3	5
Total number	82	100

Source Household census

The household asset points are the sum of the number of appliances and durables belonging to each household. Each item is given a particular number of points in proportion to its cost price, beginning from the cheapest and ending with the most expensive household items: gas stove, black-and-white television, refrigerator and so on to a pick-up car (see Appendix III). The differences in asset points show that most households enjoy a limited range of household appliances, predominantly a black-and-white or coloured television, a radio, a gas stove, an electric fan and a refrigerator. A large number of households have a motorcycle, whereas only 3 households own most kinds of household convenience, including a pick-up, in contrast to four households who have no appliances.

5. 4. 3. Education

According to Vandergeest (1993), the first secular school in Thailand was established by the monarchy during the late nineteenth century to prepare the children of the royal family and the upper nobility for positions in the emergent bureaucracy. Although a programme to set up primary schools for peasant children was a part of the administrative changes at the turn of the nineteenth century, the minimal educational resources were concentrated in schools for officials and nobles until 1932. A new regime began with the 1932 coup, and by the late 1930s most village children in Thailand, boys and girls alike, attended school. In the same way, according to her research in 1972-1973 in Nathawi, another district in Songkhla, McVey (1984) notes that although attendance was officially made compulsory during the 1920s, it was not until the 1940s that the law was seriously enforced. Most adult villagers obtained

compulsory education from the local primary school located in, and shared by an adjacent village.

With the expansions of administrative and educational system during the 1960s, the vast employment opportunities were provided for peasant children. Educational qualifications caused families to put far greater efforts than before into supporting their children to study further. According to most parents, educational qualification is the most reliable resource for a better future for their children. Such a relationship has been especially evident during the last fifteen years. According to my observations and the wealth-ranking result, a household's high status is, to a great extent, related to the level of education which their children obtain. Investment in one's children's higher education also signifies modern status of the family (McVey, 1984). Such a trend is also evident in the village, and the extent to which its consequences impact on the household resource profiles in different social groups is highlighted in chapters 6 and 7.

More parents support their children, as much as they are able, in pursuing education beyond the compulsory primary level. It is evident that most teenagers in the village are in secondary school or vocational college. Furthering secondary education while in the monkhood is another alternative for a number of teenage boys from poor families, or those of minimal studying motivation. Only those who seem strongly unsuited to further study are finally allowed to leave school for a job, though with much parental discontent. Similar to their counterparts who continue studying, almost all teenagers with compulsory education, boys and girls alike, leave the village to work in urban areas. In this respect, it is noted that all young women in my case-study households leave home to work in cities for at least a few years before settling in the village. Such a trend is different from the one experienced by older women, who as single young girls were never allowed to leave the village, apart from going to weekly morning markets with other elderly women.

5. 5. Economy

The household census results, together with data derived from interviews, are presented in this section as an overview of the economy of the village. The dynamic relations between changes in social, technological and environmental aspects of village life are also evident in changes in village economic activities.

Table 5.7 Primary source of household income

Primary source of income	**Household number**	**Per cent**
- Own rubber plot(s)	18	22
- Rubber labourer	11	13
- Small trading	12	15
- Wage	8	10
- Remittances	8	10
- Earning from rubber plot(s)	13	16
- Fishing	3	4
- Rearing pigs	3	4
- Others	5	6
Total number	82	100

Source Household census

Half of the households rely on rubber cultivation (51 %) : 22 % work in their own rubber plots, 13 % are rubber labourers, and 16 % have rubber labourers working in their rubber plots. But this income is insufficient to maintain household livelihoods, particularly in lean seasons. Almost all households earn supplementary income from other sources, such as making thatches from nippa palm leaves, selling betel nuts and coconuts, and raising pigs and cattle. A number of households (15 %) earn their living from small trading, whereas a few of them (10 %) depend on wage payment and remittances. There are only 3 fishing households in the village.

Table 5.8 Number of household with/without rubber plot(s)

Household	**Household number**	**Per cent**
- HH without rubber plot	33	40
- HH with 0-3 rai of rubber plot	14	17
- HH with 3.1 - 5 rai of rubber plot	13	16
- HH with 5.1 - 10 rai of rubber plot	12	15
- HH with 10.1 - 25 rai of rubber plot	8	10
- HH with greater than 40 rai of rubber plot	2	2
Total	82	100

Source Household census

Whereas 40 % of the households have no rubber plots, most of those with ownership of rubber plot own not more than 5 rai. Only two households own more than 40 rai of rubber plots. For a few households, some of their rubber plots are less than seven years old and are not yet productive.

5. 5. 1. Rubber-sheet making

Rubber planting in Thailand was initiated in 1890 when the Governor of Trang Province introduced indigenous rubber seeds from Malaysia into the province, and thereafter the expansion of the new species was spread all over the southern region (Panlaaynaak, 1971). The Organisation of Rubber Replanting Aid Fund (ORRAF) was established in 1960 to fund rubber plot owners to replace indigenous rubber trees with high-yielding species (Laawan, 1979). According to the 1993 agricultural census, rubber plots in the south occupy approximately 8.08 million rai and belong to 472,682 households, accounting for 60 % of Southern agriculturists. Of the rubber plots 94 % are high-yielding, 34 % of which were supported by ORRAF, 38 % were self-supported, and the other 26 % were joint-funded (Centre for Southern Information, 1998).

Like the majority of Southerners, Ban Khao Bua villagers have relied on rubber plots for more than two decades. However, it was not until the 1970s that government policy was implemented to promote high-yielding varieties. It was only when villagers starting earning income from rubber plots that people from other villages changed their attitudes towards Ban Khao Bua men. Where they had been considered poor fellows who could only make ends meet by exchanging forest produce for food, they became eligible for their daughters to marry.

According to Somchai, the Assistant Village Headman *[Phuchuay phuyai ban]*, who calculated the cost of rubber planting in 1995 as part of a project proposal for a rubber processing house, the minimum price of rubber sheet has to be 28 Baht (45 Pence) a kilogram to meet the basic livelihood requirements of those involved. It is estimated that a household with 20 rai (3.2 hectare) of rubber plantation can earn about 500 Baht (£ 8.5) a day and live without any economic pressure throughout the year from 7-8 months of rubber yield. Nevertheless, my household census shows that 52 % of the households with rubber plots own not more than 5 rai of rubber land. Likewise, according to an official of ORRAF who is responsible for the Koh Yai area, the average area of rubber plot in the area is only 5 rai with low productivity (250 kilograms a rai per annum). Equally, the productive period is less than 20 years instead of the usual 24-25 years, as most households face economic pressure so they tap rubber latex for 3-4 consecutive days instead of every other day. Moreover, due to their minimal rubber yields and rubber area compared to other districts in Songkhla (about four thousand rai of the total 1.6 million rai for the province, or 0.25 %), the Koh Yai rubber-sheet producers have no bargaining power with middlemen, let alone the central market in Hat Yai where prices are controlled by world demand and supply. During 1997 - mid-1998 the rubber price was quite stable and at a reasonable level for the people (about 26 - 28 Baht a kilogram) (35 - 40 Pence) due to a price intervention scheme implemented by ORRAF. However, in 1999 the price plunged to 16 - 18 Baht (30 Pence). They prefer earning immediate cash paid by the middlemen to waiting for ORRAF's bi-weekly payment.

Those who work in rubber plots usually leave home after midnight to cut the rubber tree barks to tap latex drippings. They walk along rows of rubber trees in the damp and quiet darkness with a light and a sharp knife. By early morning one or two heavy buckets full of rubber latex are carried back home. The process of producing rubber sheets takes 3-4 hours. After being mixed with an acid, the latex becomes solid within 1-2 hours. Then, it is flattened by foot, and repeatedly squeezed into a fine thin sheet through a pressing machine. The approximately-4-square-foot rubber sheet has to be completely dry before it is sold. Men and women share the work equally throughout the process, and when the instalment of a small motor connected to the pressing machine becomes affordable, a woman can handle the whole process on her own. Most villagers sell their rubber products to middlemen who regularly visit the village with pick-up trucks, rather than the village rubber-sheet quality improvement group which is supported by ORRAF and operated on a weekly basis.

The lean periods of the year are in the rainy season (October-December) and the dry season (April-May). During these two difficult periods, most villagers depend on other sources of incomes to sustain their households' livelihoods. Men may get some temporary wage labouring jobs, while women turn to petty trades of long-standing resources on their land as well as home-made sweets.

5. 5. 2 Rice growing

Without an irrigation system, for decades the villagers used to grow rice along the lakeside. They usually started preparing the fields in May at the beginning of the rainy season, and finished the annual harvest in the next March. In general men were in charge of ploughing with oxen, women of sowing seeds, threshing, pounding and winnowing grain, whereas both shared the hasty task of replanting rice paddy. Changes in the rice farming system in the early 1980s entailed a shift in local varieties to high-yielding ones, as well as the substitution for organic fertilisers of chemical-based ones and pesticides. During the last 20 years labour intensive tasks have been minimised by mechanisation, including the walking plough and threshing machines. Along with the

shift in rice varieties, the unique southern-style cutting knife was replaced with a sickle imitated from the one used in the central region for its faster function. The traditions of the exchange of labour and the hiring of other villagers who had little or no land in exchange for grain were transformed into wage labour. For most households without their own labour, hiring wage labourers was costly (100 - 120 Baht a day) (£ 2), especially as labourers preferred to work in urban areas. On top of this problem, the floods became contaminated and destructive to the paddy rice. As such, a number of villagers conclude that modern rice-growing methods, while reducing physical efforts, are much more stressful due to their unpredictable outcomes. Consequently, as is shown in Table 3.9, only 22 % of the households still grow rice.

Table 5.9 Number of rice-growing households

Household	**Household number**	**Per cent**
- That never grown rice	20	24
- Still grow rice	18	22
- Used to grow rice	44	54
Total number	82	100

Source Household census

Half of the households (54 %) gave up growing rice because of economic and environmental changes. Meanwhile, 67 % of the 18 rice-growing households only grow rice on 1-5 rai of land and for their own subsistence, and most of them rely on their rice fields in other villages. A few of those who farm on the village rice fields have reduced their farming scales.

The major cause of decrease in rice farming is the seasonal flood during October - November being destructive to growing rice paddy, particularly during the last 5 years (except in 1998 when prolonged droughts severely diminished agricultural products all over Thailand). Traditional varieties of paddy were tall and strong enough to tolerate the floods. However, since the 1980s the traditional varieties have been substituted by shorter, high yielding ones which cannot survive in the flooded fields. The problem is

exacerbated, as the flood is increasingly contaminated by run-offs from soil quarries, pig farms, chemical fertilisers and pesticides from the hill areas. As a consequence, most rice fields have been left fallow during the last few years. Nevertheless, in 1998 the farmers were encouraged by the substantial rice harvest, as the rice fields were not flooded, and the rice price increased significantly. Therefore, a number of households have decided to grow rice again in the year to come.

5. 5. 3. Pig rearing

The villagers have relied on pig rearing for about 50 years as a means to earn cash income. According to a number of pig-rearing households, prior to the last 20 years, pig rearing methods were simple and natural, but greatly time- and energy-consuming, for women in particular. Pig feed was a mixture of boiled rice bran and chopped vegetables, including seaweed taken from the lake and banana trunks. The indigenous pigs were left roaming in backyards or kept in a makeshift pen for 9 months before they were large enough to be sold. It was not until the 1980s that a modernised approach was introduced by agencies of pig-feed producing business, through demonstration courses and incentives for the villagers. As a consequence, the villagers gradually adopted a range of new approaches, including different kinds of instant pig feed for pigs of different ages, hybrid species, and a concrete hygienic pig pen, together with a more sophisticated tending method. Regardless of the shift from natural to modernised methods, pig rearing has remained the responsibility of women. Generations of young wives have relied on such home-based occupation, as they have to spend most of their time taking care of their children at home. Although the current method is less energy- and time-consuming, pig owners have to pay more close and intensive attention to their pigs, newly born and baby pigs in particular, for they are now more vulnerable to diseases.

In other words, while such an approach increases the productivity of pig rearing, costs are also far higher than before. The pig feed price has increased from 150 Baht (£ 2.5) to 410 Baht (£ 6.8) in 10 years (a 175 % or c11 % per annum increase). This was particularly the case from mid-1997 to early-1998 when the Thai currency devalued, due to the fact that most of the chemical ingredients have to be imported. Compared to

the average inflation rate of 5.3 % during the last nine years (1990 - 1998) (my calculation from Dixon, 1996 , and Economic Intelligence Unit, 1998), the rise is extremely high. Meanwhile, pig prices fluctuate with seasons, and market demand and supply.

As village pigs cannot compete with better-quality and cheaper outputs from large-scale pig farms, poor families usually struggle to borrow money either from the Village Savings Group *[Kloom omsub]* or the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Co-operatives (BAAC) to invest in pig rearing, particularly in buying pig feed. Most village households consider pig rearing an important source of income dependent on fortunate timing of sales to coincide with high pig prices. A 4-month-old pig when prices are favourable can bring in 35 Baht (60 Pence) per kilogram. However, villagers have no control over prices as their bargaining power is low, and beyond 4 months old rearing costs increasingly offset prices. Therefore, without investment in modern techniques, the returns from pig rearing become inconsistent. However, it is noted by a few villagers that run-off from pig pens is destructive not only to rice fields but also nippa palm plots, though the damage is not severe.

5. 5. 4. Soil selling

Selling laterite hill soil has been a lucrative business in Koh Yai for more than a decade following the road construction. However, after the proclamation of the Decree of Agricultural Land Reformation in 1993, only villagers with N.S.3/title deed *[naw saw saam]* have been permitted to sell soil from their land. Consequently, the number of village households selling soil has significantly declined. In fact, according to Chan, the most respected elder in the village, the soil sellers bribed officials in order to gain a *naw saw sam*. Allegedly, such illegal land entitlements are arranged with the assistance of Lop, the former Village Headman *[Phuyai ban]*, and a couple who live in a nearby village and have a wide network of influential contacts, as they have monopolised the soil business by arranging contracts for owners of soil extracting machines, soil transporting trucks, soil sellers and customers. As well as quarrying soil themselves and arranging for others to be able to do so, they also sell soil which is produced in the

process of flattening hilly areas for land owners who preferred a plot of flat land to a steep and infertile one.

The income earned from soil selling seems to be substantial, as the land owner receives 100 Baht (£ 1.7) per ten-wheeled truck (about 30 metric tons). The number of loads sold per day depends on market demand, and ranges from a few to 30-40 loads a day. At least two households associate their soil-selling businesses to their increasing fortunes during the last few years. It is estimated that during the last few years at least one million metric tons of soil has been taken from the hilly areas in Ban Khao Bua. Nevertheless, in 1998 demand decreased due to the economic crisis in Thailand.

According to the villagers, the negative environmental impact of soil selling is severe. The over-loaded trucks, which usually run all day, everyday, damage the road surface, potentially causing more road accidents. In addition, some land adjacent to the enlarged and deepened ditches has collapsed. The flattened hills also affect the nearby agricultural land in many ways. For instance, the rubber plots through which the run-off flows after heavy rains do not grow well. Although one felled rubber tree is compensated at 2,000 Baht (£ 34) by the soil seller, this occurs only rarely. Moreover, villagers who live along a small soil road leading to the soil quarries, as well as those who transport containers of rubber latex by motorcycles or bring fuel wood from the hill by hand-made four-wheel carts, have a lot of trouble with the road conditions caused by the soil-loaded trucks. The road turns dusty and bumpy in dry seasons, then muddy, slippery and extremely inconvenient in rainy seasons. In spite of some negative responses to soil sellers from the local and district-level authorities, the problem still remains unsolved. In other words, due to the substantial profits involved for the powerful locals, the business has become well established for a few wealthy families in the village regardless of its destructive consequences, or other villagers' complaints. The issue is elaborated in Chapter 6.

5. 5. 5. Fishing

Unlike many villages in the Songkhla Lake Basin area which rely on fishing, the village's primary source of income is rubber cultivation, a relatively more reliable occupation. Only three households now earn their living by fishing, whereas men in most households only go fishing for home consumption. According to two case-studies, during the last 10 years catches have decreased, but prices have increased. The disparity between the two fishing households is enormous. While the long-standing fishing household in the wealthiest group earn between 500 - 1,300 Baht (£ 8 - 22) for 8 hours of shrimping and fishing with 300 shrimp traps and 300 fish traps on a boat with an on-board engine, the household in the lower-middle group earns about 100 - 200 Baht a day (£ 1.6 - 3.3) from near shore fishing on a boat without an engine.

Shrimping is very lucrative despite its higher expenses, as the price of medium-sized shrimps has risen from 100 Baht to 350 Baht a kilogram during the last 20 years. Before mid 1998, in spite of polluted water in some seasons, both households still earned sufficient income from fishing. According to the fishermen, it is not obvious that polluted water from shrimp farms located on the other side of the lake affects the size of catch. Additionally, it is believed that shrimps are not harmed by polluted water in shallow areas or by saline intrusion. It is noted that the number of fishermen from the other villages, which rely on fishing, has been higher since 1997 as people move back home as unemployment rose with the economic crisis. Contrary to the wealthy household's confidence in sustainability of their occupation, the poor expressed concern about their future.

The fishing couples usually leave for the lake in early morning and return by noon. Wives assist their husbands with the fishing and are also in charge of selling the catch, and those in poor households process tiny fish for sale in a weekly morning market. In April 1998 after the villagers caught a great deal of weak and dying fish gathering near shore due to a heavy intrusion of salinity from the sea, it became obvious that the amount of fish decreased drastically. During June - mid-August 1998 (when I left the village) the acute decline in catch distressed all households. The poor fishing household hardly earned any income from the fishing and had to give up.

Unfortunately, district fishery officials seemed unable to solve the problem. According to my interviews, the fishery policy implemented at the village level during the last 20 years has been the rotational releasing of fish and shrimp fry from each village into the lake on an annual basis, and is appreciated by most villagers for its productive outcomes. Owners of fish ponds affected by annual floods are also compensated with fish fry distributed from the office according to reports from the *Phuyai ban.* Due to ecological changes, increased levels of fishing gears and a incremental decline in the depth of the lake, a decline in the amount of fish and shrimp in Krasae Sin area has been noted by most villagers, even though no scientific survey has yet been carried out. The only possible solution to the catch decline problem is to release more fish and shrimp fry into the lake, as the alternative of reduction the level of fishing gear is unlikely in practice. In fact, in the 1980s under the active and strict supervision of the District Chief *[Nai amphoe]*, village leaders in Koh Yai took turns patrolling and guarding the 3-kilometre-offshore area preventing trawlers invading the legally restricted zone, resulting in increases in catch. Nevertheless, the programme was discontinued after the *Nai amphoe* was transferred.

5. 5. 6. Cattle rearing

Most households reared cattle for ploughing their rice fields when they earned major incomes from rice growing. Although they no longer grow rice, some households still continue to keep a few cows as a source of cash for emergencies, such as children's school fees or a son's bride wealth, as they would gain about 5,000 - 6,000 Baht (£ 84 - 100) from selling an adult ox. As women tend to be busy with household chores, men are in charge of taking the cattle out to feed in vacant rice fields and bringing them back home in the evening.

5. 5. 7. Long-lasting resources

Ban Khao Bua is far better than most villages in the area in the sense that its long-lasting, high-quality resources have been important sources of incomes for most households for generations. Even now most households still rely on such resources, especially in the rainy and dry seasons when rubber plots are unharvested.

(a) *Betel nuts and coconuts*

It is estimated that many households have sold nuts from their land for 3-4 generations. Most women have gone to weekly morning markets for more than 20 years to sell the nuts to people from nearby villages and districts, as well as to wholesalers from cities. According to most villagers, the quality of betel nuts and coconuts in the village coastal area is much better than those in other areas due to the soil quality. Consequently, the village produce always sells well despite price fluctuations.

With the exception of the young, almost all women in the village have been familiar with selling betel nuts and coconuts for generations. According to an elderly woman, daughters were much more economically reliable than sons in the sense that they usually took the nuts and other produce to sell in weekly morning markets, whereas sons were inclined to work on vegetable plots and take care of cattle in the village. In the past the women began their distant journey to the markets before dawn, they walked in groups holding torches carrying the nuts on their heads. It was after dusk when they returned home with food and other necessities sufficient for one week bought with the income earned from selling nuts. During the last 30 years the means of transporting the produce to the markets has gradually been shifted from walking to riding a bicycle, then a motorcycle, and finally to getting a regular pick-up or bus. Nevertheless, in spite of the rises in nut price in the last 20 years : from 10-20 Baht (20 Pence) per one hundred betel nuts to 40 -50 Baht (85 Pence), and 1-2 Baht for a coconut to 3-5 Baht (8 Pence), for most households nut-selling incomes are no longer sufficient to purchase necessities.

(b) Thatches from nippa palm leaves

Most women in the village regard thatch making, after they finish all household chores and other income earning activities, an important source of supplementary income. They have made thatches from nippa palm leaves taken from their land for about 30 years. The villagers, mainly women, in households with nippa palm plots cut the leaves and bring them back home. Thereafter, making thatches is solely women's work, and they spend most available time sitting, folding the leaves in half and binding them together to a 4-foot-long piece of nippa palm trunk with string also made from bark. With a price of 4.50 - 5 Baht (8 Pence) per thatch, a woman who spends all day making the thatches

can earn up to 300 Baht (£ 5) per day. Those without palm plot holdings are also employed to bind the leaves and earn 1 Baht a piece, or they may share half of the incomes from making thatches from other people's nippa palm plots.

The women from nearby households often sit together in a group making thatches while taking care of their young children, providing an opportunity for exchanging and sharing all kinds of information. Due to the convenience of the road, the villagers no longer transport the thatches to markets. The ready-made thatches are tidily piled up and left in front of the houses to be collected by customers, usually from shrimp and chicken farms. Sometimes an order to supply a substantial number of thatches is distributed among women who are siblings, relatives and good friends. However, demand declined during mid-1997 to 1998 due to the economic crisis and the collapse of shrimp farm businesses in nearby districts.

(c) Water melons and other seasonal produce

Both men and women grow water melon, potato, and other seasonal vegetables either on their own land or a young rubber plot borrowed free-of-charge from other villagers. They usually spend the evening tending and watering the plants. Women play a prominent role in distributing the produce to relatives and selling it in weekly morning markets.

Apart from the above-mentioned resources, the villagers, rich and poor alike, also rely on other resources collaboratively derived from village land. For instance, men who are relatives or good friends help catch fish from a villager's rice fields or fish ponds and share the fish together. In May, when a particular kind of edible insect proliferate in the hill areas, during the night the villagers go in groups to catch the insects by laying fluorescent lights under specific species of trees that the insects inhabit. Men climb up the trees to shake the branches frightening the insects, while women collect the insects which are lured by the light and fall on the ground. Women are predominantly in charge of cutting the insects' wings and feet, boiling them with coconut milk and other ingredients, as well as selling them in the market. Furthermore, some villagers,

particularly the poor, make charcoal from dry wood taken from rubber plots, though some landowners no longer permit this practice.

Since village livelihoods have been closely associated with weekly morning markets, an overview of the markets as a local transaction centre will be given. According to a number of elderly informants, the weekly morning market had been the primary means of trading for the past 80 years. Initially, there were only a few markets in Krasae Sin, as villagers predominantly relied on subsistence farming and used barter systems to obtain other necessary products, as money was scarcely earned. The barter system in local weekly morning markets existed until the 1960s. At present, regardless of availability of local groceries and accessibility to markets and shops both in Krasae Sin and Ranoad towns, early morning markets, which are held on a weekly basis in different locations in Koh Yai and Krasae Sin areas, are significant sourcesof a variety of goods for household daily consumption, and a market where households can sell their produce. Additionally, it is notable that it is only women that play the important role of selling coconuts, betel nuts and other produce, mostly collected from their own land, in the markets. According to my observations, most women go to the markets not only for household shopping but also informal networking. The markets are a social territory predominantly occupied by women as sellers and customers.

5. 5. 8. Village calendar of agricultural activities

In order to give an overview of the year-round village agricultural activities, which are the major sources of household incomes, a calendar of agricultural activities is given as follows :

Table 5.10 Year-round calendar of village agricultural activities

Month/ Activities	Jan.	Feb.	Mar-ch	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Rubber-sheet processing												
Fishing (with) - Off-board engined boat	fish trap				shri mp	trap					fish trap	
-Paddling boat	Long lined	fish-hook				fish	trap		fish trap	shri mp trap		
Rice growing 1.Ploughing 2.Sowing seeds 3.Replanting rice paddy 4. Tending 5.Harvesting												
Betel-nut selling - Selling nuts stored in water												
Pig rearing (all year round, but seasonal demands are taken into account)												
Making thatches from nippa palm leaves												
Selling coconuts												

Note ——— is the lean season.
Source Interviews and observations

In brief, women share the workload equally with men, particularly in rubber-sheet processing tasks. When fishing, men are in charge of collecting the catch from traps and submerging traps back into the water, women take control of the boat as well as selling

the catch. Throughout the rice farming process, although men are generally in charge of ploughing, women play a key role in the other steps. Selling betel-nuts, coconuts and making thatches are primarily women's responsibilities.

5. 6. Village Politics

Before beginning to describe the village's political circumstances, it is necessary to introduce key persons in the scene:

Chin - the current Village Headman *[Phuyai ban],*

Lop - the former Village Headman,

Somchai - the Assistant Village headman *[Phuchuay phuyai ban],*

Kua - Lop's niece,

Suthin - Kua's husband, and

Phien - the grandson of Lop's elder sister.

The politics in Ban Khao Bua are not different from Keyes' s (1970) and Potter's (1975) conclusions drawn from an extensive number of studies, that factionalism is widespread in rural Thailand, and factional disputes tend to be evident in the election of the Village Headman. The village factions are the result of the 1996 Village Headman *[Phuyai ban]* and the MP elections. Chin, the current *Phuyai ban*, who used to spend most of his time in Songkhla raising fighting bulls for gambling, came back to his home village to run in the village headman election. He struggled to compete with the other two candidates : Pien and Somchai. It was alleged that Chin overcame Somchai because of his influential siblings and the trick of registering a number of outsiders to vote for him. In fact, according to the villagers in both factions, all candidates ended up paying some money in exchange for promised votes. Some households received money from all the candidates, inevitably not keeping their promises, which caused anger and conflict among the candidates' families. A few months later Chin was also allegedly involved in vote buying in the village MP election.

Consequently, the villagers are divided into factions according to the election processes and results, as well as kinship networks and household location : Lop and his relatives including a number of active Village Public Health Volunteers *[Aw saw maw]* at one end

of the village, Chin and his supporters in the middle area, and Somchai's relatives and sympathisers' households clustered at the other end. Somchai had decided to work with Chin as one of his assistants as requested, but became upset and fed up with Chin's poor performance and allegedly corrupt behaviour. Consequently, he now tends to keep a distance from both factions in spite of his active participation in village projects. It is obvious that the degree of the villagers' harmony and collaboration has unprecedentedly declined.

During 1997 - 1998 the villagers were upset with the poor condition of a soil road construction project and the failure of two public well projects. Problems which were allegedly related to the corruption of the *Phuyai ban* and one of two village members of the Koh Yai Subdistrict Administrative Organisation *[Aw baw taw]* Council, as both of them were responsible for approval of the projects. In addition, as he tends to spend a great deal of time, particularly during weekends, taking care of his fighting bulls in matches, Chin's neglect of his duty was obvious on numerous occasions, which exacerbated criticism and discontent among his opposing faction and other villagers.

Details of the extent to which a number of women play a significant role in village politics is described in Chapter 6.

5. 7. The State and the Village

In addition to discussing social relations in rural Thai villages, this section describes a number of significant village organisations in Ban Khao Bua, particularly the authority of the *Phuyai ban* and his source of power. The dynamics of state domination in the village context is taken into account. According to Giddens (1984: 246), the term "state" can mean either the overall form of a "state-based society" or governmental institutions of a particular type within a society. The state in my analysis refers to the second meaning.

On the one hand, it is evident that in almost all Thai villages co-operative labour exchange groups are important social structural elements (Potter, 1976). Drawing from his well-known Bangchan village study in Central Thailand, Phillips (1965) notes that

the practising of the entire Thai social system is ultimately dependent on a sense of reciprocity. Ingersoll (1974) summarises from his study in Central Thailand that the shared economic, social and spiritual values based on reciprocal exchanges is a consequence of villagers' co-operating in financing each other's family ceremonies, agricultural work and other social relations. Based on his study of a Thai-Lao village in the Northeast, Keyes (1974) argues that all villagers depend on kinship ties to establish dyadic relations for occasions when they need help or assistance. The connections, which are divided into a core of close kinsmen and a periphery, are differently utilised according to the circumstances. Similarly, Mizuno (1978) summarises from his research in a North-eastern village that dyadic relationships are controlled by the principle of reciprocity as the custom of mutual assistance among relatives and neighbours. In fact, the rules of reciprocation of benefits and services are applied throughout the hierarchy (Hanks, 1961).

Nevertheless, it is crucial to take into account Kemp's (1989) notion that kinship as a major structural form in Thai society also renders substantial opportunities for self-interested manipulation, as its use conceals patron-client relations by introducing a greater element of commitment and trust into competitive and unstable social relations. Likewise, Rigg (1991) indicates in a number of studies that Thai village society is similar to a bureaucracy in the sense that it is hierarchical and paternalistic.

Village power relations have become increasingly complex, and to a degree the traditional systems of authority are subsumed by the processes of agrarian change, which cause social differentiation. Nevertheless, the patterns of patron and entourage (and circle) remain predominant, particularly in the case of the Village Headman *[Phuyai ban]* and the Subdistrict Head *[Kamnan]* (Rigg, 1991). Shigetomi (1992) concludes that extension of the market economy has changed the system of "obligatory voluntarism", the form of which varies according to the village contexts. In the North and the Northeast, villagers in some areas have undertaken collective activities as a means to maintain co-operation institutions. Meanwhile, in many parts of the country, particularly in the central region where territorial organisations are not clearly defined, collective actions have disintegrated and villagers sustain their livelihoods on an individual basis. In the same way, Kemp (1991) notes that as rural society is based on

chains and networks of links between individuals, when encountering the changes brought about by modernisation, villagers have no corporate, autonomous village organisations to rely on.

Opinions on the extent to which the state influenced Thai villages before the modernised administration vary in terms of the degree of autonomy of the villages. Vandergeest (1991) concludes from his study in Sathingpra district in Songkhla that Thai villages were never autonomous from the state, as they were first defined as "villages" through the dissolution of the master-serf relation, and the adoption of colonial administrative practices. On the contrary, drawing from his research in North-eastern Thailand, Turton (1989) argues that, to a certain extent, independence, co-operation and relative egalitarianism within local communities are evident from a number of studies, particularly in areas with cultural distinctions and in more nucleated and long-established villages further from political centres.

Turton's (1989) conclusion is applicable to Ban Khao Bua. According to a few elderly informants, government officials have been involved in village affairs only during the last few decades. In the past the villagers had to rely on their own kinship networks for welfare and security. The current system is considered more beneficial to the villagers, as they can make requests concerning their problems, particularly after the floods, through their representatives. In addition, the village safety and public health services have been significantly improved during the last two decades. Nevertheless, it is also noted that the villagers refer to the authorities as *Nai* (master), reflecting, to a certain degree, the villagers' subservience. The term refers to the master with whom serfs were required to register, and who was responsible for their mobilisation in the pre-modern period before the 1890s (Vandergeest, 1991).

According to Hirsch (1989), the broad range of activities implemented by the state bureaucracy at the district level can generally be termed "rural development". The state's influence in the village increases as state-led rural development has given village and villagers access to the material and political resources of the state through reformed village institutions. In this respect, Turton (1989) notes that among the more recently instituted forms of organisation at the village level, the most pervasive and "structured",

but may not always the most "permanent", are those officially introduced and centrally controlled, despite their substantial overlap in personnel, policy and function. These can be categorised into three broad types : administrative, economic/developmental, and ideological/paramilitary. The subdistrict council, transformed into the Subdistrict Administrative Organisation in 1995, is identified as the most important administrative structure. The "economic/developmental" associations, including agricultural co-operatives and farmers' groups, do not promote co-operation among villagers. Finally, the "ideological/paramilitary" associations comprise local militia or "volunteer defence forces" and the Village Scouts with its combination of ideological, developmental intelligence gathering, surveillance and security roles. Nevertheless, the third group of organisations were generally ineffective and discontinuous in practice despite their potential mobilisation (Turton, 1989).

5. 7. 1. Village organisations

To a great extent Turton's (1989) categories of administrative, economic/developmental and ideological/paramilitary groups are not dissimilar to Somchai's conclusion, after almost twenty years as *Phuchuay phuyai ban,* that most government projects in the village in the 1980s were intended to promote national security against Communist strategies. Since then, the trend has shifted to concentrate on villagers' income-generating projects. Since the "ideological/paramilitary" associations are no longer prevalent in the village, after being vigorously promoted in the 1980s, the following sections describe only the significant administrative and economic/developmental groups in the village.

(a) Administrative organisations

(i) Subdistrict Administrative Organisation *[Aw Baw Taw]*

Chareonmuang (1997) concludes that the local administrative system in Thailand dates back to 1892. After a number of amendments in the Act of Local Administration, the 1994 Act brought in a new system by gradually upgrading former Subdistrict Councils with an average annual income of not less than 150,000 Baht for 3 consecutive years into Subdistrict Administrative Organisations *[Aw baw taw].* The organisation

constitutes a council and an administrative board with a 4-year term. The administrative board comprises two groups of members - the ex officio are Subdistrict Chief *[Kamnan]*, all Village Heads *[Phuyai ban]*, the Subdistrict Health Person; and elected village representatives (two from each village). The council is composed of the *Kamnan*, two *Phuyai bans* and four village representatives who are elected from the administrative board. The role of *Aw baw taw* is to channel development services to local communities, using a budget allocated from the government and its own income from local taxation. The Koh Yai *Aw baw taw* was established in late 1996, and has planned and implemented a few village projects, mainly road construction since 1997. Only two out of the eighteen village representatives in the *Aw baw taw* council, are female. One of these women is from Ban Khao Bua. The involvement of both women members in the Koh Yai *Aw baw taw* Council is discussed in Chapter 6 .

(ii) *Phuyai Ban* and the Village Council

It is useful to begin this section with McVey's (1984) illustration of a shift in the position of *Phuyai Ban* and his sources of power in the changing village context, as to an extent the same trend is also evident in Ban Khao Bua.

According to McVey (1984) who conducted her research in Nathawi district in Songkhla in 1972-1973, until at least the 1950s the *Phuyai* (men of respect, literally "big man") and their hangers-on were the only effective source of order. Though requiring formal acknowledgement by the state, the authority of the *Phuyai ban* was based on local resources expressed through village elections. In remote settlements with scattered homesteads and subsistence agriculture, local power-holders had to rely on their own political and economic resources, including support from family relations and community acknowledgement of their status. Such family relations were built on a broad network of those who considered themselves to be kin, through marriage and patronage. The politicisation of kinship was based on a bilateral reckoning of descent, as people had a degree of choice in identifying themselves with certain family relationships. In fact, villagers chose to align themselves with the most powerful kindred to ensure protection and patronage.

Apart from their formal kin, village leaders also depended on an entourage of cronies and clients. There is no doubt that the *Phuyai ban* electoral system scarcely disturbed prevalent power arrangements, as election was based on who "had the largest family", and family size was closely related to power. Moreover, as leading families tended to preserve their position, village leadership became hereditary. However, some changes have been observed in these power relations over the years. In the early 1970s leadership changed from a life long tenure to requiring retirement at age sixty and a minimum level of primary schooling. Thereafter, in 1996 the position was amended to a four-year tenure. As there is usually more than one leading family in any settlement, circulation of the village headship position tended to be among these families on a basis of the talent and resources of the current generation. Therefore, families with incompetent or insufficient number of male adults tended to fall into decline (McVey, 1984).

In such a non-cash economy, a man's power and prestige was based on his display of largesse, resulting in an accumulation of followers, rather than possessions. In other words, power in such a system was personal, impermanent, and highly localised, as it hardly extended beyond the borders of the village (McVey, 1984).

As villagers' social contacts expand over the boundary of the village due to modernisation and development programmes, village leaders become less significant in the village power structure and in turn became the clients of more powerful patrons with close relations with merchants and officials in the district town. As local committees are promoted by the authorities to deal with specialised rural improvement schemes, the *Phuyai ban* can no longer monopolise formal links to outside authority (McVey, 1984). In the same way, Moerman (1979) also identifies the changing role of *Phuyai ban* with the modernisation process, including community development, commercialised farming, non-agricultural careers and advanced education, which came to diminish the prominence of such leaders. The single multi-purpose local leader has been replaced by specialised or competitive leaders. Keyes (1970) notes that, in the north-eastern region the role of the *Phuyai ban* varies with the extent to which they can exploit the potential sources of power available from their two constituencies: the authorities and their own villages. Masae (1996) concludes, from his research in two freshwater villages in

Southern Thailand, that although *Phuyai ban* play a key role in implementing common property resource management policies at the local level, their performances are constrained by several factors, including historical backgrounds, socio-economic conditions, organisational arrangements of communities, and the conventional administrative arrangement and bureaucratic culture.

As far as Ban Khao Bua is concerned, the 1996 *Phuyai ban* election signifies the same changing trend. Lop was the *Phuyai ban* for 15 years after succeeding Phan, his elder brother who had been in the position for a few decades before resigned to live with his second wife in a nearby province. According to my observations and some elderly informants, their kinship networks are most influential in the village due to two factors. As members of the first generation in the village, Lop's grandparents occupied many plots of vacant coastal and hill land, which were in turn inherited by their four grandchildren : one woman and three men who settled in the village with spouses from families. Moreover, most men of other well-to-do families left their land to their female siblings who married outsiders and live in the inherited property. As a consequence, Lop, his two elder brothers, and Hom, his well-respected eldest sister, have established their families' predominant role according to their material and social resources. Due to Lop's kinship networks, he was successful in drawing local participation in various village projects, which improved the village's reputation for development achievements. Consequently, when Phien was proposed to succeed the *Phuyai ban* position along their kindred line, the kinship members had to support him, and ignore his frequent drinking and outspoken nature, as well as neglecting Somchai who had closely collaborated with them for a long while.

In comparison, Chin's parents own much fewer social and material resources as Phien's. Nevertheless, his nine non-resident siblings, most of which are well-educated and have established businesses or careers in Songkhla and Hat Yai, were enthusiastic to support the campaign to ensure the position for their youngest 35-year-old brother, so that he would return home and take care of their elderly parents with a high degree of social respect. In this sense, regardless of the seemingly similar kinship element, the election is a contest between traditional local power and the outsider whose influence and prosperity are connected with the modernised world.

We have already seen that development projects are channelled into the village through officials from different bureaucracies to particular village organisations, and therefore the *Phuyai ban* can no longer monopolise village connections with the authorities. This is particularly the case in Ban Khao Bua where two successful village groups, the Village Savings Group *[Kloom omsub]* and the Village Public Health Volunteer Group *[Kloom aw saw maw],* were initiated and operated by Lop, the former *Phuyai ban,* and his close relatives. As a consequence of the controversial elections, Chin, the current *Phuyai ban,* has limited involvement in most village development groups set up before his election. According to my observations, apart from operating the village broadcasting system on an inconsistent basis, Chin was in charge of responding to official demands, including reporting a list of poor families eligible for welfare medication cards, collecting annual household tax for the *Aw baw taw,* hosting official visits, and arranging participation of the village in district-level functions. In fact, the seven-member village council is supposed to be nominated by the villagers, but Chin himself managed to appoint the members, as well as two of his Assistants and two Village Guards. According to the villagers, the village council meeting has never been convened. However, it is noted that despite his limited role in village development activities, the *Phuyai ban* has the authority to facilitate and approve the design and implementation of village development projects provided by the *Aw baw taw,* some of which have been controversial and will be discussed in Chapter 6.

(b) Economic/development organisations

This section gives an overview of a number of significant village organisations concerned with income-generation and improving of quality of life of the households.

(i) Village Savings Group *[Kloom omsub]*

With the support of the Department of Community Development in 1986, Lop and Suthin, his niece-in-law, went to an established savings group in Songkhla for a study visit and took part in a training course on how to set up a village savings group. Thereafter, they helped work in a savings group in a nearby village for 2 years before initiating their own village savings group in 1988 with 1,800 Baht (£ 30) from about 20 members. The level of savings had increased to 1.1 million Baht (£ 18,350) by 1998.

Nevertheless, the group has not been registered with the Department of Community Development, as the committee agreed that registration would not be beneficial to the group. Over the last few years, the seven committee members have also been paid 10 % of the annual profit..

Most households in the village regard the group as an effective means of both saving and loaning money. Due to its 2 % monthly loan interest, the group members can significantly alleviate their financial constraints, and local money lenders have to accordingly reduce their interests to 5 %. On the morning of the 4th of each month, the group members, mostly women with their children, come to the Centre for Village Public Health Service (CVPHS) where the transactions are performed. In the afternoon, the members who wish to request a loan wait until the committee finish accounting. Each eligible borrower has to be guaranteed by another group member. The number of would-be borrowers usually exceeds the amount of available money, particularly in lean seasons. Therefore, Lop, the president of the group, has the final decision as to whom the loans are given to.

(ii) Groups of Members of the Agricultural Co-operatives and the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Co-operatives (BAAC)

Despite their different affiliations, a common role of both organisations is to provide loans for villagers. An individual villager who wants to borrow money from either organisation has to be a member of the specific village group. The members then guarantee new borrowers in their area and pay a funeral donation (20 Baht for each funeral) (35 Pence) for its members that pass away. The BAAC tends to deal directly with its members regarding their loans; whereas the head of the village Agricultural Co-operatives is usually in charge of disseminating information concerning the organisation, collecting donation, and arranging a regular village meeting of its members and officials. Only a few active village groups request financial support from the Agricultural Co-operatives to set up income-generating projects. According to the Krasae Sin Agricultural Co-operatives Manager, the successful co-operatives groups are those aiming to promote women's income-generating activities, as women are more reliable participants than men.

(iii) Village Public Health Volunteer Group *[Kloom aw saw maw]*

Under the policy of the Ministry of Public Health, since 1979 a number of men have been trained to provide basic public health information and services in their villages. Subsequently, the Subdistrict Public Health Official replaced the men with their wives or relatives, as the men were usually drunk and did not fulfil their duties. Since 1995 eleven Village Public Health Volunteers have been appointed, with Suthin, the only male member, being the chief. With the responsibility of supplying basic information and services concerning health care issues, the *Aw saw maw* and their families are entitled to welfare medical services, and to be involved in certain social functions and ceremonies, including field trips organised by the district authorities. In addition, since 1995, with the facilitation of Public Health Officials, the Krasae Sin Club for *Aw saw maw* has been set up to promote co-operation and support among the *Aw saw maw* in the district. In spite of having 200 female members to only twenty men, all four committee members are men.

(iv) Village Women Volunteers' Group *[Kloom sodtree a-sa pattana]*

According to a district official at the Department of Community Development, the *Kloom sodtree a-sa* comprises 5-9 members who take part in training and/or workshop courses organised by officials. The group is set up in accordance with the 1994 policy concerning the promotion of the development of women. This policy has been strongly promoted, and allocated a budget during the last few years. The group committee term is two years, but can be renewed if elected by its members. With two representatives at each level of the committee, the whole structure is hierarchically ranked from the village level upwards to the subdistrict, then the district, and finally the province. While the president of the district committee is the wife of the District Chief *[Nai amphoe]*, the provincial president is the Governor's wife. In the past district officials occasionally organised a number of one-day workshops to equip the women with knowledge and understanding of women's roles and responsibilities in their community and household, together with certain health care issues. Discussion of the extent to which women were involved in the group is included in Chapter 6.

In addition, members of the group are the same as the Village Housewives' Group *[Kloom maebaan]*, which was set up a few years ago by officials of the Department of

Agricultural Extension in accordance with the 1969 policy of providing women and the youth with home-economic training courses including food preserving and handicraft programmes. Additionally, most of the group members are also *Aw saw maws*. According to the women, since they are already overwhelmed with their own work, the group is unlikely to initiate any new projects with the minimal training skills obtained from the courses. Consequently, apart from being requested to participate or to assist in some provincial and district formal functions, the *Kloom mae baan* failed to play any significant role in the village.

In conclusion, all of the above-mentioned village groups were initiated and set up by authorities from different organisations with a top-down approach in response to the national development policy. To an extent, the village situations correspond with Wijeyewardene's (1967) observations that the discontinuity of some village groups is due to the fact that they are intended for particular tasks, and such cannot be called on to fulfil any other tasks, as they do not conform to the tradition of on-going associations.

As far as local participation is concerned, Lop and Somchai note that after 1975 when central funds were allocated for local development projects, it has become unlikely that villagers will participate in any development projects without wage payment. This contrasts with prior periods when villagers, men and women alike, were keen to devote their time and labour to collective projects. In this respect, Vandergeest's (1991) field study in Sathingpra district in Songkhla shows similar results but with a totally different meaning. That is, since the 1970s a situation where villagers with more egalitarian relations, as the authority redefined development as their right to participate with reciprocal payments, replaced the previous coercive development approach disguised in the language of "helping".

My fieldwork experience can be related to Demaine's (1986) and Rigg's (1991) conclusions that Thai villagers perceive "development" as a form of largesse offered by the state (or better educated/wealthier outsiders) as part of the patron/client bargain. Villagers are generally passive in the formulation and implementation of projects, as

they cannot see their direct role in the process. Consequently, village-level development activities are characterised as "mass mobilisation" rather than "popular participation" as claimed, whereas "self-reliance" turned out to be a form of "forced labour" (Rigg, 1991). The attitude of being a recipient may be deeply rooted in a history of interactive relations between the villagers and the state. As Demaine (1986) states, due to having been the mere recipients of the government's paternalistic largesse for a long time, many villagers have become dependent upon such help and less able to solve their own problems.

According to both village leaders, during the last few decades resources have been wastefully dumped into the village from the bureaucracies in accordance with top-down development plans. Initially, a number of villagers also questioned my presence in the village, specifically what I would give them. When I took a couple of Japanese yoga teachers into the village to organise a yoga course for any villagers at my own expense, some villagers were sceptical of whether I had got financial support for the project and had kept it myself. It seems quite unlikely that such an attitude will be altered unless hindrances, particularly the objectives of development projects and bureaucratic approaches to development implementation, are overcome. Development failures from such an approach then result from the common administrative view of villagers as being backward. Rewards and evaluation of the development outcomes do not originate from the villagers, the object of improvement, but from within the bureaucratic system itself (Kemp, 1991).

5. 7. 2. Village temple : traditional village centre

The traditional rural Thai way of life is closely associated with temples and merit-making activities. Ingersoll (1975) notes from his research in a village in Central Thailand that merit-making is publicity in social relations. Although an individual's merit is a very personal intrapsychic phenomenon, its validation lies on it being public knowledge. Villagers enhance their merit by sharing it with others, particularly their family members, as an act done on behalf of them. One significant aspect of merit-making with important consequences for the assessment of one's identity is the accumulation of prestige. As individuals attain prestige according to their known record

of merit-making, they enjoy a sense of personal worth, together with an enhanced reputation for honesty and reliability, and a better financial credit rating. When villagers make merit in communal rituals, community unity, peace and the opportunity for enjoyment of life are also enhanced.

With respect to the village temple, Ban Khao Bua villagers usually share their temple with villagers of an adjacent village. According to the elderly, the deterioration of the local temple became evident after its revered old abbot passed away a few years ago. As the number of men staying in long-term monkhood is decreasing, it is difficult to motivate monks to be permanently responsible for a countryside temple. In fact, a few monks came to stay for a short while, but finally left the temple. Such a situation is in accordance with the downward trend in that number of monks and novices across the country, particularly in urban areas, as the introduction of government-sponsored mass education has undermined the significance of temples as a primary source of literacy for males (Keyes, 1986).

During the last few years only one 28-year-old monk, who was also born in the village, has resided at the temple. The number of monks temporarily increases during the Lent season, when men in their twenties are expected to ordain to express gratitude towards their parents. During this season all households have to take turns serving food to the monks. Apart from during very few important annual religious ceremonies, only the middle-aged and the elderly villagers participate in temple activities, and women rather than men are inclined to take part in merit-making ceremonies. According to my observations, the proportion of women participating in temple ceremonies is always much higher than men. In this respect, a number of scholars note that women are consistently more diligent in performing ritual merit-making activities, particularly feeding monks and attending temple services than men, as women's role in Buddhism is related to nurturing and giving sons for ordination (Van Esterik, 1982a; Kirsch, 1982; Keyes, 1984).

However, it is also evident that senior men are always the ones who ask the monks to give religious precepts and sermons. Ten respectable seniors and local leaders are nominated by the abbot and villagers to help in fund-raising and managing the temple

money, and only few women are involved in this matter. A case study of woman who plays a prominent role in the temple is included in Chapter 6.

Furthermore, according to a few elderly villagers and local officials, during the last few decades four cultural and religious ceremonies, which are usually based in the local temple and performed within the local context, have been promoted by the district authorities to be organised at the district office in accordance with the government policy of restoring and conserving traditional Thai cultural ceremonies. Irrespective of the intention of the local people, on some occasions the villagers, particularly those who have been actively involved in development activities, have to participate in the ceremonies as requested by the authorities or the abbot of the village temple. Such circumstances reflect Hirsch's (1989) notion that the state has extended its transformation of Thai villages from the institutional dimension into aspects of culture and ideology.

In conclusion, during the last few decades, due to its incorporation into the market economy and the implementation of development policies, Ban Khao Bua has been transformed from an isolated subsistence rice-growing village into a rubber cultivating community with better infrastructure and accessibility. In addition to rubber-sheet processing, the households also rely on other sources of income, particularly long-standing resources in the village. Women have played a key role in a wide range of such income-earning activities. The impact of the development process has been significant not only on the economic and environmental dimensions, but also on social relations, as well as political and cultural aspects of the village and households. A variety of village groups have been initiated and promoted by the authorities in response to government policies. The involvement of villagers in development groups and village factions is determined by household resources, particularly kinship networks.

5. 8. Women' s Perceptions of Village Changes

In order to complete the overall picture of village changes, it is necessary to investigate how women in the village, the focus of the study, relate such changes to their own and their family livelihoods. This section describes women's perceptions of changes in the

village, drawing on the results of my two focus group discussions and interviews with a number of women.

It is agreed that village daily life has become much more comfortable during the last 20 years due to a substantial increase in public facilities and commodities, especially transportation and electric appliances. Middle-aged women in particular compare the present to the past household chores. With an electric water pump and a gas stove they spend less time and energy fetching well water and collecting fuel wood. A local rice mill established during the last 20 years has also released women from their daunting daily duty of pounding rice grain. Comparing themselves with their mothers, most women also consider their reproduction work less labour- and time-consuming, due to technological improvements. In addition, women consider themselves income-earners as well as home carers. Irrespective of the less physically demanding household tasks, shifts in income-generating activities and an increased need for cash have resulted in some women thinking that they work harder than their mothers. The women have better access to information from all over the country and the world through radios and televisions which are now available in most households.

As far as the economic aspects of life are concerned, on the one hand, the villagers earn much higher incomes, since the produce from their land now has monetary value, whereas previously it did not. Due to the road and transportation improvements, selling produce is more convenient. Goods no longer have to be delivered to markets, as middlemen come into the village themselves. However, the costs of modern life styles are excessive, and households have to spend more money on almost every aspect of their daily activities, even though they can produce or provide different kinds of food and supplies themselves. Children's educational expenses become the heaviest burden for a large number of households during the last 20 years.

Women consider themselves more concerned with the economic situations of their households than their husbands, and they are predominantly in charge of borrowing money from different sources. With the exception of government credit, the men are too embarrassed to borrow money from other sources. The credit system has shifted from borrowing money from relatives without interest, to loans with interest from village

lenders, and then to borrowing from the Village Savings Group *[Kloom omsub],* as well as participating in the Rotating Savings Credit Association *[Share].* Reciprocal relationships still remain the essence of village social relations, particularly the kinship networks, though to a lesser degree as people move out and settle in different parts of the country. The predominance of monetary value has resulted in a shift in the exchange system from non-cash into cash, since all kinds of produce and labour are valued in monetary terms.

In spite of the above-mentioned positive aspects of change in daily life, some of which are caused by physical transformation of the village, the villagers are also aware of negative environmental changes. A lower level of underground water during the last few years is related to hill forest clearance and rubber plots, whereas contaminated floods in rainy seasons are results of chemical runoff from rubber plots and pig pens. Concerns about village disharmony were also mentioned by a number of women in Chin's faction in particular. Yet, no solutions for these problems are identified.

Most women perceive development projects such as the construction of public facilities by the government as resulting in improvements. Only a few women who have been actively involved in development activities consider themselves participants in the development process. This group of women attribute their higher degree of information and social skills to their participation. In spite of having two women members of the Subdistrict Administrative Organisation *[Aw baw taw]* Council, the women cannot see how women members contribute differently to the community. Although some women agree that women are capable of taking local leadership positions in accordance with the increasing number of women *Phuyai ban* and *Kamnan* across the country, most consider women's family responsibilities to prevent them performing such tasks as well as men.

5. 9. Women case-studies and their households

A closer focus on the village situations is obtained through investigation of a number of different households in various social groups. This section gives an overview of changes in the households of twenty-three women in four social groups, most of which are identified by the women themselves. It also incorporates a diagram illustrating the position of the women in relation to the village conflict.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the selection of the twenty-three women for case-studies was based on the outcomes of wealth ranking and household census, which categorised households into four social groups. Households that are categorised in the same social groups by both the household census and the wealth ranking methods are selected first. Of these, appropriate households are selected according to household composition, resources and women's position. However, having completed this stage too few households had been selected. Therefore, households categorised according to the wealth ranking alone were used, as this method was considered more reliable. The number of women selected from each social group is proportional to the number of households in the group.

Table 5.11 The low group

Case-study	Source of income	Change	Major causes
(1.1) Amphai (58 years old)	The couple are wage labourers.	+	The couple make ends meet and have minimal financial burdens caused by children
(1.2) Phanna (57 years old)	She sells produce and home-made sweets. Her husband no longer works.	-	She works to support herself and her husband.
(1.3) Usa (36 years old)	The couple work as rubber labourers. Her 2.6 rai of rubber plot is not yet productive	-	Due to her husband's regular drinking, she is responsible for three children, while getting remittances from two working daughters.

Case-study	Source of income	Change	Major causes
(1.4) Tuenjai (35 years old)	The couple work as rubber labourers. Her 3 rai of rubber plot is not yet productive.	-	She bears increasing burdens since the youngest son has a brain injury caused by her husband.

Note The signs + and - indicate positive and negative changes respectively.

Source Interviews with the women

The negative trends in three households are closely related to declines in human resources, particularly men's earning capabilities, mainly caused by their frequent drinking.

Table 5.12 The lower-middle group

Case-study	Source of income	Change	Major cause
(2.1) Jurai (57 years old)	The couple work in her 12 rai of inherited rubber plots	-	Her husband is a regular drinker and gambler. She is also a gambler.
(2.2) Ratree (65 years old)	She sells sweets and other produce. Her husband works as a labourer. Her son works in their 1.5 rai of rubber plot.	-	The couple support two non-resident sons and one son's family who share the house.
(2.3) Nuan (63 years old)	The couple grow vegetables on a small plot of land.	+	The couple receive regular remittances from their children who have finished higher education.
(2.4) Ladda (64 years old)	She has been a petty trader in town markets for decades. Her husband no longer works.	-	She helps take care of her grandson while earning money to support herself and her husband.
(2.5) Nantha (74 years old)	Her daughter is a rubber labourer.	+	The widow gets support from her daughter.
(2.6) Hansa (52 years old)	She has a rubber labourer work on her 6 rai of rubber plot.	-	Since her husband died in an accident in 1995, she could not go fishing on her own.

Case-study	Source of income	Change	Major cause
(2.7) Sunee (48 years old)	The couple go fishing. She also sells underground lotteries.	+	Her family burden has declined since her children started work.
(2.8) Anchan (42 years old)	The couple work as rubber labourers.	-	She borrows money to buy a 10-rai rubber plot, and her husband's work capability is limited due to his frequent drinking.

Source Interviews with the women and other villagers in the cast of (2.1) Jurai

It is noted that most of the negative trends are also closely related to changes in human resources, particularly financial burdens caused by children's education and limited working capabilities caused by men's frequent drinking.

Table 5.13 The higher-middle group

Case-study	Source of income	Change	Major cause
(3.1) Wannee (68 years old)	She has her son work in her 8-rai rubber plot and shares half the income.	-	She has to pay debts caused by her sons.
(3.2) Chantha (57 years old)	The couple work in 8 rai of rubber plots, and have sold soil during the last few years,	+	The couple have no more children's education to finance and earn a lot of money from selling soil.
(3.3) On (51 years old)	She has a small grocery and rears pigs. Her husband, the *Phuchuay phuyai ban*, works in 2 rai of rubber plot, as well as a traditional massager.	-	They bear the heavy financial burden of sending a few children through higher education.
(3.4) Niem (45 years old)	The couple work in their own 6.5 rai of rubber plots.	-	They bear heavy the financial burden of sending two children through higher education.

Case-study	Source of income	Change	Major cause
(3.5) Kua (49 years old)	The couple work in their own 12 rai of rubber plots. She is a wholesaler of betel nuts and coconuts.	-	The couple still bear the heavy burden of sending two children through higher education.
(3.6) Dawan (49 years old)	She sells produce and sweets in markets and works in her 3 rai of rubber plot. Her husband is a fisherman.	-	She works on her own to support four children to school and college.
(3.7) Kanya (38 years old)	The couple are rubber labourers and rear pigs. Their 7-rai rubber plot is not yet productive.	+	The couple have no financial burdens.
(3.8) Urai (42 years old)	The couple work in her inherited 5-rai rubber plot and rear pigs.	+	The couple have no financial burden.

Source Interviews with the women

The obvious causes of negative changes in most households are associated with the financial burden of sending their children through higher education. In contrast, three households with positive changes have no such burdens.

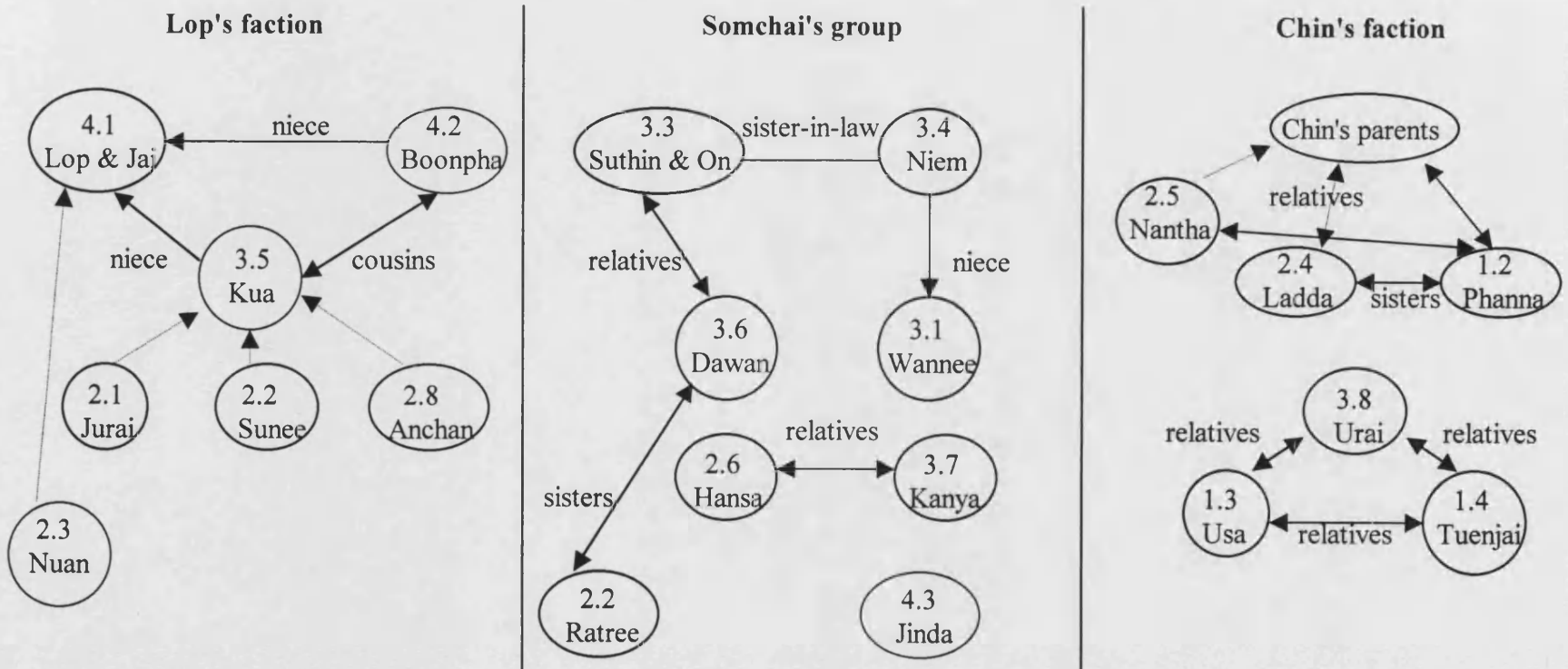
Table 5.14 The high group

Case-study	Source of income	Change	Major cause
(4.1) Jai (56 years old)	The couple have a soil quarry and have an investment in a shrimp farming business.	+	Their prosperity has been accumulated from different kinds of business, beginning from growing rice on inherited land.
(4.2) Boonpha (54 years old)	Her husband is a primary school principal. The couple own 37 rai of rubber plots and land.	+	She inherited rice fields and rubber plots from her parents and they bought more land.
(4.3) Jinda (43 years old)	Fishing and shrimping, and working in a 2 rai rubber plot.	+	The couple have accumulated incomes from fishing and shrimping and have no financial burdens.

Source Interviews with the women

It is noted that all of the households enjoy surplus from their resources and have no financial burdens caused by their children's education.

To a great extent, the positive and negative changes in the household resource profiles are related to inter-connected components of changes at the village and societal levels. The following diagram illustrates the position of the women in relation to the village conflict.



Not clearly identified

1.1. Amphai

3.2. Chantha but she had some conflicts with Lop's faction.

Note : ___ = kinship

.....▶ = gaining support from

Figure 5.1 The position of the women in relation to the village factions

In summary, the brief accounts of these twenty-three women and their households reflect particular aspects of changes in the village mentioned before. Different types of resources, particularly land with rubber cultivation, labour and money that family members either contribute to or demand from the households, impact on the status of the women and their households. It is noted that changes in the family life cycles of most households are closely associated with the structural dynamics of the village, as well as specific individual factors. The issues necessitate further analyses in the following chapters.

Conclusion

This chapter is composed of complementary pictures of differing levels of scope, ranging from a broad view of the village to the perceptions of women and accounts of their individual households. The first part of the chapter presents an overview of Ban Khao Bua in relation to its historical background, physical features, population, economy and village organisations with a focus on village dynamics as a consequence of the village's relation to the interplay of the state and the market. As the village households become incorporated into the complexities of the market economy through the commoditisation of agricultural production, particularly rubber-sheet making and pig rearing, their livelihoods have increasingly been dependent upon their productivity and market demands. The drastic decline in rice growing is evidently a consequence of environmental and economic changes. The need for cash becomes the most important force in the dynamics of household production. During the last few decades, modernisation, which accelerated with development project implementation, has not only brought about a higher standard of living for most villagers, as well as released women from labour-intensive and time-consuming household tasks; but also led to environmental problems and social disparities in the village. During the last fifteen years the villagers have become aware of the significance of education, and put great efforts into supporting their children to obtain higher education.

In addition to engendering village factions, the domination of the state into the village way of life is evident from the extent to which particular administrative and

economic/development groups have become significant in the village context. However, it is apparent that public participation in the development process at the local level is constrained by the top-down bureaucratic development approach and the deeply-rooted attitudes towards development as largesse provided by the government. To an extent, most village women have become optimistic about the changes regardless of the increasing economic pressures on their families. Finally, an overview of the twenty-three women in four social groups, is given together with their relationships to the village factions. The dynamics of the women's and their households' status are related to a range of interactive factors, particularly specific structural components and their household resources profiles, which are discussed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER SIX

THE DYNAMICS OF HOUSEHOLD RESOURCE PROFILES AND WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE CHANGING CONTEXT

This chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part discusses the extent to which a number of factors, as the interplay of the state and the market at the community level, have affected the dynamics of household resource profiles in different social groups. Although the factors are interrelated, the analysis seeks to isolate each particular factor and examine its relationship to changes in household resource profiles. The extent of women's involvement in the changes in household resource profiles is also elaborated. Thereafter, the second part discusses the extent to which women have responded to the changing village context. A number of case studies are presented in order to illustrate the extent to which women are instrumental in development implementation, as well as to explore their involvement in local politics. The analysis provides us with insight into the ways they use the resources they have at their disposal.

6. 1. Environmental Change

This section describes the extent to which the household resource profiles have been affected by particular environmental changes, which have been stimulated by the interplay of the state and the market.

A significant change in the village natural resource base has been flooding contaminating coastal land where rice fields are located. This has brought about a drastic decline in the number of rice fields during the last decade, as households give up growing rice. The dramatic decline in rice farming is also related to other factors. As already mentioned in Chapter 5, although in the past the village rice fields were regularly flooded in most rainy seasons, the indigenous rice species was tall enough to survive, and its yield

sufficient to satisfy home consumption in most households, as well as sales by most households in the higher-middle and high social groups. In the last ten years, high-yielding varieties, as well as modernised farming techniques including chemical fertiliser and the walking plough machine, have been introduced into the village. The shorter high-yielding rice paddy is damaged when it is submerged under the flood water, which has become a mixture of chemical run-offs from pig pens, rubber plots and soil quarries. In addition to decreased yields, an increase in rice farming costs, including chemical fertiliser and wage labour for ploughing and harvesting, is another disincentive for most households. In other words, contaminated floods and the decline in rice growing represent a synergy of ecological and economic factors. As a result of these problems, most households turned to relying on rubber-sheet processing as their major source of income, particularly those in the higher-middle and high social groups who own reasonable amounts of both rice fields and land in the hill areas. However, the scale of rubber plots owned by most households in the low and lower-middle social groups is insufficient to meet the demands of the families' increasing expenditures.

Consequently, the value of land in different locations of the village has changed with these economic and environmental dynamics. In the past when rice growing was a major source of income for the villagers, owning a reasonable amount of coastal land produced a certain degree of prosperity. Thereafter, ownership of land in the hilly area, which has been transformed into rubber plots, became the most reliable source of household income, whereas the economic value of rice fields has drastically declined. It is noted that some households in the poor groups, (1.2) Phanna, (2.2) Ratree, (2.3) Nuan, and (2.4) Ladda own almost 10 rai of rice fields on which they relied for a few decades, but its production value has become minimal during the last few years.

To sum up, the environmental change, which is the impact of the implementation of the state policy and the market economy, has adversely affected the material resource of rice-farming households. Only those who can afford to invest in other types of material resources, particularly rubber plots, have been able to adjust well to the change.

6. 2. Implementation of State Policies

This section discusses the extent to which the state has affected the household resource profiles. According to Hill (1997), the state is defined both as a set of institutions with s power over a specific territory, located at various levels ranging from national, regional, and local, and the functions which the institutions perform. Furthermore, the degrees of freedom the institutions enjoy from central agencies vary substantially. As far as the analysis is concerned, the policy implementation is classified into two levels: national-level institutions and local projects at the village level.

6. 2. 1. Policy as national institutions

The next sections discuss the extent to which three aspects of the implementation of governmental policies at the national level. Policies which have affected household resource profiles include the promotion of high-yielding rubber, the educational system, and financial loans.

(a) High-yielding rubber promotion

As Phongpaichit and Baker (1995) indicate, different cash crops have been promoted all over the country since the 1960s, including rubber in the south. The promotion of high yielding rubber cultivation since the 1970s has been the function of the Organisation for Rubber Replanting Aid Fund (ORRAF). Initially, the funding policy focused only on households with ownership of indigenous rubber plots, for which a few households in the high and higher-middle social clusters were eligible. Thereafter, the policy was extended to cover small land holders. Men tend to be responsible for contacting ORRAF officials for funding. Since rubber-sheet processing has become a lucrative source of income, a large number of households have also invested their own money in transforming their small pieces of land into rubber plots. It can be concluded that rubber plots has become the most significant material resource for the village households. The size of mature rubber plot(s) is directly related to the amount of income the households can command as is evident in the case of (4.2) Boonpha.

Box 1 The relationship between wealth and ownership of rubber plot(s)

(4.2) Boonpha and her husband own 37 rai of rubber plots which she inherited from her parents and bought with their own savings. For 50 years her parents accumulated their wealth from farming on a large scale of rice fields and trading. During the last twenty years they sold the rice fields and turned to invest in para rubber plots, which were transformed into 70 rai of high-yielding rubber plots and become a new source of properity for the family members.

(b) Promotion of the educational system

Rabibhadana (1993) refers to education as the main instrument in the successful creation of the nation state, since it played a key role in incorporating isolated and semi-autonomous villages into the Thai nation state during the last 50 years. By the mid-1930s primary schools had been established in most rural communities. Subsequently, Thai parents become to consider education an important long-term investment in assuring their children permanent employment (Yoddumnern-Attig, 1992).

Financial burdens caused by supporting their children through higher levels of education are one of the major causes of women's concerns, particularly those in the lower- and higher-middle social groups. For households without ownership of a rubber plot, income from men's wage labouring and women' s petty trading are significant sources of cash for children's educational expenses. Furthermore, within the village sexual discrimination in educational opportunities was apparent. Eldest daughters were unlikely to further their education as they had to help their mothers with the household chores, particularly taking care of their younger siblings or supporting them through school or college. Equally, in poor households where resources were limited parents tended to support their sons rather than daughters to obtain higher education.

Box 2 Households' investments in education

When (2.7) Sunee separated from her ex-husband due to his having a mistress, she had to support their teenage daughter and son on her own by working as a construction worker in Hat Yai. After her daughter finished secondary school, Sunee asked the girl to give up studying and seek a job to help her support her son to finish higher education.

(2.3) Nuan's husband worked as a wage labourer in town for a decade to send their five children to school and college, whereas Nuan worked in their own and other people's rice fields. It was not until their children finished higher education that their work loads decreased.

While (2.2) Ratree has a small rubber plot where she works with her eldest son, her husband works as a wage labourer to support their second son in obtaining a BA.

Additionally, apart from being an important source of supplementary income for most women in the low and lower-middle groups, petty trade is the primary source of incomes for (2.4) Ladda and (3.4) Dawan who have taken local produce and home-made sweets to town markets on a regular basis for years to support their children through higher education.

Even for households in the higher-middle group who send most children through higher education (five of the eight households), lean seasons bring about severe economic problems, and they have to rely on loans from different sources, as well as money from the Rotating Savings Credit Association *[Share],* which will be elaborated in the next section.

In short, the promotion of the educational system, together with rises in demand for educational qualifications in labour market and decreasing opportunities for rural livelihoods, has resulted in greater educational investments in most households. They put the greatest effort into transforming material resources into human ones by

supporting the younger generation through higher levels of education. However, the extent of a household's accomplishment is mainly based on levels of material and social resources they have at their disposal, as is evident in the following sections.

- Return to households' investments in education

A number of women attribute their higher self-rating satisfaction scores to the relief of financial burdens when their children attain higher education. However, the extent to which the households enjoy the financial outcomes of their children's educational attainments seem limited in most cases. Although most of the households obtain some remittances from their children, particularly daughters, only few of them receive long-term financial support irrespective of level of education obtained. Nevertheless, according to the women, it is unusual for their children to keep sending them remittances after they get married, as they have to support their own families. Some of them, particularly the daughters, may manage to give their mothers a little money in times of need.

As far as the educational attainments of the younger generation are concerned, most of them obtain either a diploma or a BA from vocational or teacher colleges. This provides them the possibility of junior positions in governmental offices, factories or other companies in cities. However, living costs are inclined to offset their low income. Consequently, a few mothers in the lower-middle group still struggle to keep supporting their sons to pursue the living standard of the urban middle-class.

Box 3 Parents' continuous supporting their children

(2.1) Ratree not only got loans from the Kloom omsub to help her youngest son pay installments on a motorcycle, the couple also save to support their second son, a temporary employee in a governmental office, in his part-time study for a BA.

Likewise, (2.7) Sunee saves her own income from selling underground lottery tickets and takes part in Shares to pay for debt from the Kloom omsub, both of which were used to help her son pay installments on a motorcycle and a room in a condominium.

Such circumstances correspond with Keyes' (1991a) notion of the educational system in Southeast Asia, that although rural people realise that the credentials acquired through schooling have state-wide salience, and they consider formal education as their major means for achieving upward mobility; only a few members of poor rural families have succeeded in moving up the social ladder after attaining higher levels of education, whereas the vast majority find themselves at the bottom of a social order structured on educational attainment.

- *Inequality in educational opportunity*

According to a study of rates of economic return to educational investments conducted by the Office of the National Commission of Education (1996), it is apparent that to a far greater extent, students whose fathers are engaged in trade business, administrative positions, or academic professions pursue higher levels of education than those whose fathers earn their income from farming or mechanical work. It is only in primary education that there is a degree of equality of educational opportunities. Junior and senior secondary education, diploma and higher education show increasing inequality of access. In addition, inequalities are also evident in the rate of payments for different levels of education. Whereas students in primary and secondary education bear 30 per cent of the educational costs, those in public universities are responsible for only 7 per cent of overall expenses.

The same trend of educational inequality is also reflected in the village situation, where educational achievements of the younger generation are closely related to their parents' material resources. It is apparent that most of the graduates and college/university students are from the households in the higher-middle and high social groups. Of the three postgraduates, one is from the higher-middle social group and the other two from households in the high social group.

Moreover, Buddhist institutions also provide support for boys to pursue education. It is noted that in a few poor households, having sons ordained as novices provides a means of obtaining high education for the poor. However, girls in poor families remain excluded from such an educational opportunity.

- Reinforcement of household resources

A number of households with abundant resources not only send their children to university, but also keep supporting them to more material convenience and job achievements after their graduation.

Box 4 Wealthy households' contribution to their children's achievements

(3.2) Chantha and her husband sent their two sons to university. Subsequently, she managed to fund two large bribes for her second son's promotions in the navy, and plans to buy a car for her youngest son who has just begun a teaching job in a public school to encourage him to obtain a MA.

Similarly, after (4.2) Boonpha's two daughters graduated and started their own families, she supported them to buy cars and houses when they began working in cities.

In turn, the educational attainments of children are also considered a source of social prestige for their parents, and the reputations of households are closely associated with their children's educational achievements and job positions. As mentioned in Chapter 4, one component of the wealth ranking of households is their children's level of education and occupations. In other words, when educational qualifications are increasingly valued, high levels of educational attainment enhance both human and cultural resources for households whose material resources are already at a relatively high level.

In conclusion, the increasing demand for educational qualifications has reinforced the social differentiation in the village. Households whose material and social resources are at a relatively high level can make long-term investments in human resources by supporting their children to finish higher education as well as to attain social mobility, and gain human and cultural resources in return. In contrast, poor households are not

only economically and socially constrained in such investments, but also gain least return.

(c) Promotion of financial loans

The establishment of the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Co-operatives (BAAC) and the Agricultural Co-operatives in the 1970s provided more sources of credit for most households in need of investing in income-earning activities and/or children's education. However, the other objective of the BAAC, establishing local agricultural co-operatives, was achieved only to a lesser extent in most villages, including Ban Khao Bua. Moreover, the success of the Village Savings Groups *[Kloom omsub],* which are promoted according to the objective of the Department of Community Development, varies with the characteristics of the specific villages themselves. It is noted that women are predominantly responsible for borrowing from the *Kloom omsub*, while men are inclined to deal with the governmental agencies. Only four women in the low, higher-middle and high social groups are responsible for borrowing from the BAAC. These women have played a leading role in their families due to their husbands' limitations. The money they borrowed was used for expenditures in their families.

In short, the village households have been under greater financial pressure due to the rises in demand for investments in human and material resources. It is evident that material resources provided by the governmental financial agencies are increasingly crucial to the livelihoods of most households. To an extent, access to formal financial loans is gendered due to men's traditional role of dealing with officials and women's lack of confidence in public errands. However, a number of women manage to overcome the barrier.

6. 2. 2. Village development projects

This section elaborates the extent to which village development projects are related to the dynamics in household resource profiles. Accounts of women's involvement in development projects, as well as in the local context of development implementation, are discussed in section 6. 5.

(a) The majority of village development projects

According to the *Phuchuay phuyai ban* and the former *Phuyai ban*, development projects in the village are mainly concerned with construction of water containers, wells and a pond, which are designed and allocated by the District Office in a top-down approach. Consequently, the usefulness of these assets are quite limited.

The project which has had the biggest impact on a number of women is a training course in rubber tapping skills organised by the Department of Agricultural Extension in 1995, as it provides the opportunity for them to work independently in rubber plots. According to a number of villagers, the most beneficial projects have been the releasing of fish and shrimp fry into the lake, as they provide long-term consumption capacity, and the *Kloom omsub.*

(b) The Village Savings Group [Kloom omsub]

The establishment of *Kloom omsub* has increased the availability of finance for most households, and provide a productive form of saving for a number of households in the higher-middle and high groups. Additionally, its 2 % monthly interest rate causes village money lenders to reduce their own interest rate. Its outstanding achievement in mobilising more than one million Baht of savings within ten years is directly associated with the capabilities of the group leaders; particularly Lop, the former *Phuyai ban,* who has been the president of the group since its establishment; Suthin, his niece-in-law, who is the secretary of the group; and Somchai, the *Phuchuay phuyai ban.*

Although in the last few years four women committee members have been elected by the group members, three of whom are Lop's nieces and the other Lop's daughter-in-law, their roles are limited to clerical tasks. Since the group activities have become routinised on a monthly basis, and the male leaders are already responsible for the primary duties of making decisions regarding the distribution of finances and conducting an annual meeting, there seems little left for the women.

In other words, the extent to which most village projects have affected household resource profiles is minimal. However, to an extent, the *Kloom omsub* has been

significant in terms of providing capital for poor households to invest in human resources and increase material resources. It is noted that the training course in rubber tapping skills has enhanced women's production role, whereas their responsibility for managing family money has been reinforced by their predominant involvement in the *Kloom omsub*. These issues shall be discussed in Chapter 7.

To sum up, it is evident that due to the promotion of high-yielding rubber, as well as the environmental change, rubber plots have become the most significant material resources for village households. Due to the increasing demand for education, most households put the greatest effort into supporting their children through higher education. In order to invest in modernised means of production and human resources, most households have increasingly depended on financial loans provided by the government. However, poor households have not only been socially and economically constrained in the investment, but they also gain the least return. In contrast, well-to-do households have significantly benefited from their long-term transformations of material and social resources into human resources. Consequently, social differentiation in the village has been reinforced by the investment in human resources and its return. Limited material and human resources in poor households have been degraded by men's drinking behaviour, which, to an extent, is related to the promotion of alcohol consumption as well as cultural factors in Thai society. Two village projects have not only been significant to the accumulation and transformation of material resources in most households, but also reinforced women's production roles, as well as their duties to manage family money.

6. 3. The Market

The analysis in this section identifies the market with the demand and supply of production, services, and consumption which are causes and consequences of the changes in household resource profiles. The impacts of the market on households are also associated with the state policies.

6. 3. 1. Increasing demand for food consumption

Demand for fish and pigs from urban areas has resulted in income earning opportunities for most households. The fishing household in the high social group attributes their rising income to the 200 % increase in fish and shrimp prices during the last ten years. Rises in demand have led to higher incomes in all fishing households, but the level of wealth attainable varies with a number of factors, including fishing skills and accumulation of production capital.

In the same way, as pig prices have risen more than 200 % during the last twenty years, most households rely on pig rearing as another source of income. These income-earning opportunities are related to both improvements in transportation systems, which introduced fast and convenient deliveries of goods from the village to cities; as well as the economic conditions of particular households, which determine the extent to which they can afford modernised production inputs.

In other words, increases in material resources in most households have been the results of rises in demand for food in cities, as well as the higher degrees of the exploitation of natural resource base, the lake and the land, with modernised technologies.

6. 3. 2. Supply of modernised production input

As far as fishing is concerned, the introduction of the off-board engine in the early 1980s enabled fisher folks to go further offshore and achieve a larger catch. However, in the long run the higher incomes are offset by investment costs, including buying the engine and materials for making fish and shrimp traps. Equally, according to two fishing household case-studies, such investments have become less likely for poor households during the last few years due to rising costs, particularly in shrimping.

Box 6 Fishing households' investments

Due to their twenty-year accumulation of human and material resources in relation to fishing, (4.3) Jinda's family is the only financially secure fishing household in the village. The couple initially fished using a paddleboat, then bought an off-board engine with their savings. Their surplus was high enough for gradual investments in fish and shrimp traps.

In contrast, (2.7) Sunee and her second husband have fished with a paddleboat for five years, and their incomes are only sufficient for daily expenses. In addition, as their boat is too small to be installed with an off board engine, it is unlikely that they will invest in buying an engine.

The situation is similar for those who rear pigs. Pig rearing methods have become modernised, more productive and expensive with the introduction of hygienic concrete pig pens, vaccination of piglets, hybrid pig species, and chemical pig feed. As mentioned before, an average c 11% annual rise in pig feed costs during the last ten years contrasts with the 5.3 % average annual inflation, and is a major cause of loss during fluctuations in pig prices. However, it is unlikely that households will revert back to traditional low-cost methods, as such methods are not only time and energy consuming, but also too slow and unproductive to meet their urgent cash requirements. Consequently, only a few households in the higher-middle and high social clusters have enough capital to maintain pig rearing through periods of loss, as they command alternative sources of incomes. For other households pig rearing results in fluctuations in earnings dependent on pig prices or the ability to borrow money.

In other words, the levels of material resources which particular households can invest in modernised means of production determine the degree of the accumulation of their material resources.

6. 3. 3. Emergence of new lucrative business

Since the road connecting the village to urban areas was constructed in the 1990s, the proliferation of construction projects has rendered soil selling a lucrative business for households with ownership of land in the hilly area. As the 1995 Decree of Land Reform restricts the business to only a few households with land entitlements, soil selling is undertaken only via an influential middleman from a nearby village who is alleged to have bribed a number of officials to illegally issue land entitlements for his business. It is apparent that only three households in the high and higher-middle social clusters earn large amounts of money from the business. The first household is that of the in-laws of the village member of the Subdistrict Administrative Organisation *[Aw baw taw]* Council. The second is the household of (3.2) Chantha, who is the middleman's aunt. The third is (4.1) Jai's family, whose soil-selling business is closely related to her husband's former position of *Phuyai ban.*

Additionally, Jai's family's remarkable prosperity in the last few years has also resulted from their shared investment in a shrimp farming business set up by her siblings in a nearby village. Shrimp farms have become pervasive along the coastline of Krasae Sin district despite some official restrictions. Jai's brother, a local teacher who has been actively involved in district-level public activities, is in charge of the family business. It is evident that access to the new lucrative sources of income is not only based on high levels of material resources, but also social resources in terms of influential kinship and political networks.

6. 3. 4. Closer connections between the village and urban areas

This section discusses the impacts of the incorporation of the once isolated village households into the complexities of the market economy on the household resource profiles.

(a) Cities as sources of resources for the households

Of the older generation only a few poor household heads went to work in cities due to the inconvenience of poor transportation and social restrictions on the mobility of young women. However, during the last two decades the situation has drastically changed, and almost all of the younger generation, men and women alike, leave the village to either further their education or earn an income. It is noted that all young couples in the village have spent time working in cities before moving back to settle on their parents' land. Such a trend is an unprecedented phenomenon, particularly for young women in all social groups. In addition, most poor households now rely on remittances from their non-resident children until they are married and have set up their own families.

A number of factors are considered to have contributed to this trend. Firstly, the amount of land owned by their parents is not sufficient for their children to divide up and make a living from. Secondly, it is unlikely for those of high levels of education to find jobs compatible with their education and expectations in the village or any rural areas. Furthermore, the modern life style enjoyed in cities is generally seen as more attractive. It is noted that children who finally return to their family in the village tend to be the ones with least resources in terms of education or occupation possibilities.

As far as social resources are concerned, the links between the village and city necessitate an expansion of the scope of kinship networks beyond the village area. Having reliable relatives or acquaintances in urban areas becomes vital for most households in terms of getting a job for their teenage children or reducing the costs of sending their children to further their studies. Nevertheless, the extent to which such social resources contribute to the livelihoods and well-being of households is limited, as the impact also depends upon the other resources of the households.

Box 7 Households' kinship networks

Although (1.3) Usa is able to send her three daughters to work in a factory in Songkhla, as her brother is the manager of the factory, relying on such kinship networks does not enable her to overcome her financial problems.

Contrary to this, whereas (3.5) Kua and her husband struggle to support their children to obtain higher education, she reduced her expenses significantly by sending them to stay with her brother who is a college teacher in a nearby province.

In the same way, (3.2) Chantha's brother is a navy officer, enabling her son to get a position in the navy, as well as allowing her to pay bribes via her brother for her son's promotions.

To an extent, the levels of households' material and social resources are inter-related to and reinforced each other. Consequently, material and human resources in well-to-do households have been particularly strengthened by their social resources in cities.

(b) The Rotating Savings Credit Association (ROSCA) [Share]

According to a village *Share* organiser, who initiated the business in 1980, she got the idea from news of the collapse of a fraudulent business, which was conducted in the same way as a *Share*. In this respect, the village *Shares* are set up as a consequence of urban influence and the flow of information from urban experiences.

A *Share* usually comprises about 20-25 members whose money is collected by the group organiser on a monthly, or weekly basis. The payment ranges from Baht 400 (£ 6.4) to Baht 1,000 (£ 17) per month, but the average is Baht 500 (£ 8) per month. The first installment is taken by the organiser who is in charge of the group transactions. Thereafter, all group members will bid for the subsequent sums by proposing a monthly interest. The winner, who proposes the highest interest, gains the second-month payment, which the organiser collects from all members. Throughout the term, she has to pay the monthly interest bid on top of her regular monthly payment, and has no more bidding rights. The group term finishes when the final sum is given to the last member who has never won the bid. This person tends to have fewer financial pressures and therefore less incentive to compete with other members, and usually benefits the most, as the sum is topped up with the interest paid by the other bidders. In the meantime, members with urgent need for money have to bid their highest affordable amount to

win the bid. While some nervous bidders tactfully check whether the others are in the same condition or not, other members may bluff their ways into the bidding to gain higher earnings. Both the organiser and the members have a responsibility to guarantee the reliability of the other party in order to ensure the system runs smoothly.

The four village *Shares* are composed of women in the village and from nearby area. Apart from a few poor women with irregular and limited income, most of the women surveyed join at least one *Share [Len share]* for a few years. A number of them rely on *Shares* on a monthly basis as an important financial resource when in urgent need of money, particularly in lean seasons.

Box 8 Women's reasons for *Len share*

(3.8) Urai joined seven Shares to save money to construct a new house.
Likewise, (2.8) Anchan joined five Shares to pay her debt from buying a rubber plot.
(3.5) Niem, whose three sons are in college and school, joined five Shares to cover her expenses in lean seasons.

Meanwhile, some women in the higher-middle and high social groups who have no financial pressures consider it an effective high interest means of saving. Women are responsible for the bidding activities, as they are in charge of the family's money management. Therefore, saving money to make monthly payments and bidding in *Share* is another regular stressful task for most women. During my stay in the village, I often saw a number of women walking back from a *Share* organiser's house with exhausted and frustrated manners, as they had failed to win the bid and had to get money from elsewhere to meet their households' needs.

In addition, participating in *Share* seems common in different social groups in Thai society. Saamakkeetham (1998) notes from his research on factory workers that a large number of workers rely on *Share* as a source of credit. Due to financial pressures, they bid at high rates and end up heavily in debt. In the same way, Gordon et al. (1992)

conclude from a study of two groups of women in a slum community in Bangkok and in an industrial area near Bangkok that 40 % of the women depend upon *Share* as a crucial source of credit and savings.

In brief, *Share* has become a significant material resource in most households. It functions as contingency money and capital for poor households, and a means for fast saving for well-to-do families. Women have been responsible for managing their material and social resources in their households to obtain as well as pay for the *Share* money.

(c) Village as a source of reproduction of labour

Although taking care of grandchildren has long been the duty of the elderly members of most rural households, the current circumstances have become different. Once the younger generation have set up families, child-care burdens become financially and physically unbearable for most working couples. Thereafter, such burdens are transferred to their parents, particularly their mothers in the village, or the women have to leave home for a period of time to help their children take care of their grandchildren in the cities. Moreover, the daughters of poor households who are wage labourers in cities have to return to their parents for delivery and maternal care, as not much support exists in the urban setting.

Box 9 Poor households' burdens

(2.1) Ratree and her husband bore the extra burden of bringing up their two grandchildren for almost ten years while the boys' parents worked in Songkhla. In fact, prior to that Ratree went to stay with their only daughter in another province to help take care of her young child for a few years. When Mukda, her second daughter-in-law, got pregnant and could no longer work, she moved from Songkhla to stay with the elderly couple.

Similarly, (2.4) Ladda and (2.8) Anchan also experienced the same situation, sharing child-care tasks with their daughters who have had to give up working due to their pregnancy and child rearing.

Such a duty is another burden on top of the poor households' financial pressures, and it is the mothers who are primarily in charge of providing their daughters both physical and financial support. Similarly, while without bearing the same financial constraints, some women in the higher-middle and high social groups also bear the same burdens.

Box 10 Well-to-do households' burdens

(3.4) Niem spent a few years taking care of her granddaughter who was sent to live with her family while the young girl's parents were working in Hat Yai. The girl was sent back to her parents when she reached nursery age.

Likewise, (4.2) Boonpha has spent her last ten years taking care of her four grandchildren who were sent by their working parents in the city to live with her for a few years until they reached nursery age. In spite of her dislike of urban life, she decided to stay in Bangkok to help her second daughter, who was working for a foreign firm, take care of her born baby.

Limited resources in poor households are decreased, as their material and human resources have been transferred as child-care provisions for their children's families. In fact, the ultimate beneficiaries are urban sectors which have not been obliged by social policy to provide child-care services for their workers.

Settaput and Yoddumnern-Attig (1992) conclude, from an extensive survey of studies of Thai family situations, that women who are unskilled and involved in temporary, low-paying jobs, have minimal child-care alternatives: specifically, quitting work to live off their husbands' wages, securing a daytime child care provider (at a very low rate of pay), or sending their children to live with elderly parents in their natal villages. Similarly, Hnin (1994: 30) notes that due to limited options, many female migrants have to leave their children in the village with grandparents. Saamakkeetham (1998) concludes, from a research report and his own study on factory workers, that there are equal proportions of workers sending their children to their parents and relatives and those who take care of the children themselves. Similarly, according to Pintoktaeng and

Boonchai' s (1999) survey of workers in 20 factories in the Bangkok area, 45 % of workers have to send their children to their parents or relatives in the countryside. Richter and Havanon (1995) cite Richter et al.'s (1992) study of child-care in urban areas that a considerable number of women working in formal sector in Bangkok spend some time living separately from their children when they were less than five years old.

Material and human resources of poor rural households are exploited as cost-free sources of reproduction of urban labour, as child-care provision in the workplace is never incorporated into public policy. In this respect, Molyneux' s (1979) argument is noteworthy. That is, between the two reproductive activities which are ideologically assigned to women: housework and child-care, it is child-care which is of the most benefit to the capitalist state.

In conclusion, as the once isolated village has been integrated into the complexities of the market economy, close connections between the village and city become significant to the accumulation and transformation of household resources. Although rises in demand for food in cities have increased material resources in most households, the levels of the accumulation of material resources vary with the prevalent material and social resources the households can invest in modernised means of production. Only households with influential kinship and political networks have access to new lucrative businesses. Consequently, social differentiation in the village has been reinforced by the market economy. Moreover, the introduction of *Share* has brought about a new type of material resource for most households, corresponding with drastically increasing demand for cash. Women's traditional responsibility for managing the family money has been significantly reinforced by their involvement in *Share.* Material and human resources, particularly in poor households, have been transferred for child-care provision for their children's families. Women's time and labour inputs have been exploited as the cost-free source of reproduction of labour supply for urban sectors.

6. 4. Women's Sustenance of Social Resources in the Changing Context

In spite of the changes at the household and community levels, inter-dependent relationships remain significant social resources of village households. This section elaborates the extent of women's involvement in sustaining social resources.

6. 4. 1. Women's reproduction work

This section delineates the extent to which women's reproduction work remains significant in sustaining social resources in the changing village context, focusing on two levels of social relationships.

(a) Patron-cliental pattern

As mentioned before, the primary source of income in most village households has changed from rice farming to rubber-sheet processing. Consequently, apart from the households who work their own rubber plots, two changes in the major social groups have been observed according to their different patterns of material resource ownership. Rice field owners have become rubber plot owners, while rice labourers have become rubber labourers. The rubber labouring households, most of which are in the low and lower-middle social groups, are dependent on rubber-plot owners for sustained employment, as well as for advances on their wages for their financial contingency.

Box 11 Women's sustenance of social resources

(2.8) Anchan and her husband have worked in (4.2) Boonpha's rubber plot for a few years. Anchan is usually asked by Boonpha's family to help at their social functions.

(2.5) Nantha and her daughter, Nit, used to work as labourers for (4.2) Boonpha's mother and (4.1) Jai before shifting their affiliation to Chin, the current Phuyai ban, as well as working in a rubber plot belonging to Chan, one of the two wealthiest households in the village. In addition to working in the rubber plot, both mother and daughter also play an active role helping with Chan's household's work and social functions, as they did for their former patrons.

In the same way, (1.2) Phanna, and her son and daughter-in-law, who work in Chin's sister's rubber plot, all identify themselves as members of Chin's faction. Phanna's daughter-in-law also helps with the cooking and washing up whenever Chin organises a party.

It can be concluded that, in spite of the changes in the means of production and the significant material resources in the village, the traditional patron-cliental pattern remains predominant among households whose resources are significantly different. However, women's reproduction work remains crucial in fostering social resources with their patrons.

(b) Reciprocal exchanges

According to my observations, regardless of their factional differences, most households take part in other households' social functions, particularly funerals, as reciprocity is the basic exchange rule in the village. Villagers are supposed to help others in labour-intensive tasks, including rice harvesting and house construction, as well as preparing for wedding, ordination and funeral functions. As one woman put it,

> "...One must have at least one function in one's life, if you do not go to help out in other people's functions, who will ever come to help you in return..."

For decades men and women have been responsible for different duties in social functions. Men fetched well water, cut trees and collected wood for fuel, making coffins and shelters, and were also responsible for construction and slaughtering pigs and cows. Meanwhile, women were predominant in all kitchen work, ranging from preparing ingredients, pounding curry paste, processing coconut milk, cooking, serving and washing up. During the last decade, excluding slaughtering, most men's tasks are minimised with technological improvements and market supply, whereas most women's labour-intensive work is mainly unchanged, with the exception of mixing curry paste with a food blender and grating coconut with a machine. Consequently, scenes of women working busily in the kitchen and men enjoying drinking are common in all social functions.

Moreover, in addition to a money donation, irrespective of whether asked or not, it is a social rule explicit among closely related households that women give up production work for a few days to help out in the kitchen at social functions held by their relatives or friends. Sometimes they delegate their daughters or daughter-in-laws to give a helping hand. Such labour and skills provided by women are vital for all social functions, as the high costs of feasts are significantly decreased by their free labour inputs. Consequently, the social resources of the households involved have been maintained by such reciprocal assistance for generations.

In brief, in spite of the environmental and economic changes, women's reproduction work is of significance in fostering social resources between their households and others to maintain reciprocal exchanges as well as support from their patrons.

6. 4. 2. Women's kinship and extra-household networks

As mentioned before, most village households are matrilocal. A number of women have their sisters or other female relatives live nearby or at least in the same subdistrict. According to a number of women, ties are strongest among sisters as well as female relatives in women of both the older and younger generations. The extent to which women rely on labour, financial, and emotional support from their sisters and female relatives is of significance in all social groups, particularly those in poor households who have limited resources. Women who have young children sometimes depend on their relatives' child-care assistance. In turn, some village women take loans from the *Kloom Omsub* or the BAAC to help solve their relatives' financial problems.

The women who came from outside to live with their husbands in the village, such as (2.5) Nantha, (2.7) Sunee and (2.8) Anchan, also establish close relationships with resourceful women. According to Sunee and Anchan, they have significantly relied on (3. 5) Kua in terms of financial as well as emotional support, as they have no relatives in the village. Their dependence is also partly related to their active participation in development activities requested by Kua and her kinship networks, from which they gain material and social resources.

In other words, women's kinship and extra-household networks remain primary social resources as well as means for obtaining material resources for themselves and their families.

In conclusion, although material and human resources in most households have been transformed by the environmental change, the state, and the market, women's reproduction work remains crucial in sustaining and building up social resources for their households as "household service work" (Sharma, 1986). Additionally, the extent to which women rely on their kinship and extra-household networks has been significant not only as personal resources, but also social resources and means for obtaining material resources for their families.

6. 5. Women's Involvement in Village Development

This section discusses the extent to which women are involved in the implementation of development programmes and projects, focusing on the roles of the original resources they possess, as well as the resources they obtain from such participation. In addition, the discussion also incorporates how specific women are engaged in local politics.

6. 5. 1. Women in the process of development implementation

As noted by a few women who have been actively involved in a range of development projects in the village, it was not until the last two decades that they came to participate in such activities, beginning with the Village Scout workshops in the 1980s. Before that time no such opportunities emerged, and they did not enjoy such a range of public activities in different places outside the village. The extent of specific women's involvement in development implementation is illustrated in relation to their participation in a number of project activities, as well as their perceptions of their participation. In spite of women's limited participation in the development process, evidence of women who have room for manouevre in their involvement is also included.

(a) The Village Public Health Volunteer Group [Kloom aw saw maw]

As mentioned in Chapter 5, the *Kloom aw saw maw* is prominent in Ban Khao Bua and was rewarded in 1997 by the district authority for its high quality performance. Suthin, the only male member, plays the leading role in the group.

According to the group members, the experiences and knowledge they gain from their involvement in the *Kloom aw saw maw* are of most significance. A few members in the low and lower-middle social groups, (1.2) Phanna, (2.1) Jurai, and (2.7) Sunee, attribute their social skills in dealing with officials, and higher social acceptance from other villagers to their role as *Aw saw maw*, providing villagers with basic health care information and distributing medicine allocated by the Subdistrict Health Station. In the early 1990s the *Aw saw maw* were trained in how to perform a traditional folk dance *[ram klong yaaw]* by an official from the Koh Yai Public Health Station, with the intention of performing at district-level functions. This was the first time the village women had the opportunity to show their capabilities in public. Apart from the medical welfare for themselves and their families, they enjoyed a number of free-of-charge trips to different provinces, very rare opportunities for most village women. In other words, for the poor women, being an *Aw saw maw* renders them new categories of social and human resources, as well as a new type of cultural resource.

(b) The Village Women Volunteers' Group [Kloom sodtree (a-sa pattana)]

Women's participation in development projects has been promoted during the last ten years as a consequence of the implementation of the mainstream WID approach. However, due to changes in approaches to policy implementation, degrees of achievements in the policy implementation have varied with levels of inputs from local authorities.

In the case of Ban Khao Bua, officials from the Department of Agricultural Extension came to promote the Village Housewives' Group *[Kloom maebaan]* in the early 1990s by setting up a few training courses on making artificial flowers and bakery. However, they are of no use to the women due to the lack of market opportunities, and the women already being busy with other work. Similarly, officials of the Department of Community Development set up few one-day workshops concerning women's caring

roles in their families in the early 1990s, and the *Kloom sodtree* was set up according to the objective of the Department to promote women's participation in rural development. Thereafter, the activities of both groups involved participating in district ceremonies as requested by the officials. It was not until mid 1998 when Dara, a forty-year-old single woman subdistrict official was transferred to the district that the *Kloom sodtree* became activate again.

Dara came to Koh Yai with a range of activities designed by the Department of Community Development. Due to her past achievements in strengthening the *Kloom sodtree*, she plans to promote the same group activities in the district. Like most district officials I talked to, Dara concludes that it is easier to mobilise women villagers' participation in development projects than men, as they are more reliable and compliant.

Due to her objective of promoting unity among members of the groups in Koh Yai, Dara encouraged the groups to set up women's football teams to participate in two competitions. The first among village teams, and the second between the top women's team and a team of retired Village and Subdistrict Headmen *[Kamnan, Phuyai ban]*. Both matches were presided over by the *Nai amphoe* and involved most high-ranking district-level officials. It was the first time the women learned how to play football, and none of the Ban Khao Bua group members took part in the games, as they were concerned that possible accidents would hinder their daily income-earning tasks.

After the second match on *Kamnan - Phuyai ban* 's Day in July 1998, a number of *Kloom sodtree a-sa pattana*, local leaders and district officials enjoyed a dinner party with food prepared by the *Kloom sodtree* members. Like all parties organised by the district authority, both men and women enjoyed dancing and drinking large amounts of spirits and beer, which were donated by the *Kamnan Phuyai ban* Club.

In mid August 1998 Dara played a key role in organising the district Mother's Day ceremony in which all officials, local leaders and village groups were to take part. As well as paying respect to a picture of the Queen, whose birthday is annually blessed all over the country, a prominent mother from each subdistrict nominated by the *Kloom sodtree* was rewarded for her public contribution and remarkable achievement in

bringing up her children to obtain high levels of education and having a promising future. In this ceremony, (4.2) Jai was one of the awarded mothers. In addition, the *Kloom sodtrees* from all of the four subdistricts were requested to provide entertainment and their members to participate in the ceremony in the group uniforms. In fact, Dara also planned to organise a women's boxing match on that day, but none of the women were keen to volunteer.

Based on my participation in the above-mentioned activities, it was obvious that the *Kloom sodtree* and their activities are initiated and mobilised according to the objectives of the authorities. On the one hand, most group leaders are the wives of village leaders including *Phuyai ban* and *Phuchuay phuyai ban.* It is noted that most members are not from the poorest families, and Dara herself also emphasises in the meetings that as the members are not the underprivileged, they are supposed to be able to contribute their time and money to the society. Moreover, as most of the women are in their forties and fifties, they no longer have any child-care duties. On the other hand, the women's involvement in the activities assigned by officials can be associated with different incentives. The participants are not only given material resources which would presumably be provided in the projects, but also the opportunity of broadening their life horizons and building up social resources for themselves and their families through their interaction with local leaders and the authorities. In fact, wearing the uniforms of the *Kloom maebaan* or *Kloom sodtree* for participation in district-level activities can be considered a status symbol, a new category of cultural resource in the development context. This issue is also apparent in the next section.

(c) The 1998 International Women's Day

The celebration of the International Women's Day has been organised during the last decade by the Department of Community Development following the international mainstream of women and development policy. According to district Community Development officials, it was not until 1995 that the Provincial Office promoted the International Women's Day by organising a provincial-level fair requiring the co-operation of Community Development officials and the *Kloom sodtree* in all districts.

The 1998 International Women's Day fair was held in a school in Hat Yai on Saturday the 7th of March instead of the actual date (the 8th). All of the group members with a performance, as well as local produce and products, were requested at the fair. The most active *Kloom sodtree* in the Krasae Sin district was assigned to be in charge of the performance. Summoned by the group's leader, (3.5) Kua asked the other two women, (2.7) Sunee and (2.8) Anchan, whom are very close to her to come along. After the performers agreed on a particular traditional dance and songs, they spent all evenings of the week prior to the day rehearsing. I went along with them to observe the practices and got to know the women involved in the activity.

Two women leaders played a key role in the preparation process, Kum, the wife of the *Phuyai ban* in another village and the leader of the *Kloom sodtree*; and a dance teacher who is a member of the *Kloom sodtree a-sa pattana* at the district-level. According to their understanding, the day is celebrated by women in many countries of the importance of women. The dance teacher told all participants that it was necessary for them to take part in such a public activity so that they would gain more knowledge about income generating activities and how to take better care of their families. Kum had minimal information concerning the day and the programme, but she managed to prepare the performance according to the official's request, as he had been very supportive to the group by providing a rotating fund for the group members. Consequently, it was necessary to help him in return. Likewise, the three Ban Khao Bua women had no idea about the day and its programme. Nevertheless, without asking permissions from their husbands, they gave up working for one day to join the fair. Participation was not paid, unlike the *klong yaaw* dances they perform in most social functions, but they regarded such a voluntary performance as their public contribution, to which all villagers should provide a certain amount of their time and effort. For Anchan, who is always tense from her heavy family and financial burdens, such an activity seemed to be a release. After finishing her daily tasks in the evening, and without time for dinner, she rushed with enthusiasm to join the dance group. She put it, "It's good to get out of the house for this dance. I can forget things for a while".

On the day, forty members of the *Kloom sodtree a-sa pattana* from the Krasae Sin district left home in the early morning in group uniform and got on a bus to the fair, which comprised approximately two thousand participants. The vast auditorium was packed with women in dark blue shirts and skirts, and the field was occupied with booths selling produce and products from all districts in Songkhla. It was said that the fair was especially well organised, as the Governor's wife was rewarded as an outstanding woman development worker by the National Commission on Women's Affairs (NCWA). The Director General of the Department of Community Development who came from Bangkok to preside over the opening ceremony emphasised women' s significant roles as mother and income earners of the family. The Governor also reiterated the same message. Thereafter, the stage was occupied with a series of performances, most of which were dances and fashion shows. The participants spent most of the time in the auditorium enjoying the shows and games, though some of them took an opportunity to go shopping in the town market. The Krasae Sin dancers were very proud of their performance. They were also keen to observe how the other dance groups performed and dressed, and got some ideas to improve their own performance. Finally, the fair finished in the late afternoon. The Krasae Sin women arrived home in the late evening, and Anchan and Kua went to work in the rubber plots throughout the night.

In other words, traditional cultural constructs of women's responsibilities for reproduction work, as well as women's femininity, are predominant in women's development activities. However, irrespective of the objectives and the extent of the project achievements, to an extent the women seem to benefit from their participation. Nevertheless, the levels of their gain vary according to the prevalence of their resources.

Furthermore, the nature and extent of cultural resources which women can build up in the changing context has also changed from the traditional means of merit-making performance to participation in development activities.

Box 11 Traditional type of cultural resource

Hom, (4.2) Boonpha's 74-years-old mother, has been active in contributing substantial merit-making donations to the local temple and in traditional ceremonies. From a reasonable level of resources inherited from both sets of parents, she and her husband gradually built up the family's prosperity from rice farming, trading and then rubber plots. Due to their substantial assets and kinship networks, together with her long-standing prominent role in all religious and traditional ceremonies, the couple are now amongst the most respected elders in the local area and are regularly invited to preside over social functions.

The traditional importance as the local centre for social and cultural activities of the temples has gradually declined, and the impact of development institutions and projects becomes more significant in the village. Consequently, active involvement in particular development projects can bring social prestige as well as material and human resources to the participants. This is evident in the cases of *Aw saw maw* from the poor households and a few active members of the *Kloom Sodtree*. Taking part in official ceremonies and social functions with the authorities and MPs is a new category of social status for village women, distinguishing them from their fellow villagers. To an extent, such participation also renders them opportunities to associate with the authorities and build up social networks. Additionally, such involvement offers women new experiences, which are not only beyond their domestic domain, but also too expensive for them to afford by themselves.

(d) Women in the Subdistrict Administrative Organisation [Aw baw taw]

The trend of promoting women's participation in the *Aw baw taw* has been apparent in the last few years due to great efforts of a number of women's NGOs.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, the *Aw baw taw* constitutes two bodies, the Committee and the Council. There are two female members in the Koh Yai *Aw baw taw* Council, Ya and Sri.

Box 12 Female members of the *Aw baw Taw* Council

Ya, who is in her early thirties, is the Ban Khao Bua representative. After finishing secondary education at a vocational college, she and her husband worked as employees in a factory for 6 years before moving to live on her well-to-do widow mother's land for a few years. After participating in the Kloom sodtree, she ran for the first village election of Aw baw taw Council Members in late 1996, being encouraged through her attending a workshop on promoting women's participation in Aw baw taw organised by a non-governmental programme in order to promote women's participation in local politics. With support from Lop, the former Phuyai ban and her relatives, including Somchai, the Phuchuay phuyai ban, she was elected.

In contrast, Sri, a 50-year-old rubber labourer, has been actively involved in public activities and social functions, as well as development projects, for about fifteen years despite her family' s financial constraints and her husband's initial discouragement. Her leading role in her village women's groups seems to be well-accepted.

According to my interviews, on the one hand, both female *Aw baw taw* Council Members acknowledge the conflicts of interest between two factions in the *Aw Baw Taw*, as well as corruption. Although they are discontented with such misconduct, they cannot intervene to eliminate them, so remain silent and ignore such behaviour. On the other hand, they considered themselves well treated by their male colleagues, and do not feel sexually discriminated against. The fact that both of them had to prepare for and clean up after a dinner party organised by the *Aw baw taw* to welcome the newly transferred District Chief *[Nai amphoe]* without assistance from their male colleagues did not upset them, as they consider it their responsibility. Additionally, I also noted that Sri was extremely busy serving food and drinks at two conservation ceremonies to release fish fry into the lake organised by the Lake Conservation Club of which she is the only female committee member. At the same time, the other committee members were dealing with high-ranking officials and influential guests.

Moreover, neither of them seems to have any idea about the women's development issues to be incorporated into the *Aw baw taw* projects. With an awareness of her limited power in the *Aw baw taw*, Sri contends herself with being co-operative and bringing resources to her village. Ya got a job as a temporary employee at the district hospital in 1998, as she was so distressed at her powerlessness with regard the conspiracy of the *Phuyai ban* and the other village member of the *Aw baw taw* Council in manipulating village projects that she decided not to run for the second election in the year 2000.

In conclusion, it is obvious that both Ya and Sri play a limited role in the *Aw baw taw*, and therefore do not contribute to women's livelihoods in their villages. In fact, according to action research conducted in two *Aw baw taw* in the central region by the Institute of Technology for Social Development, Chulalongkorn University in 1997, when women members of the *Aw baw taw* Councils are encouraged to prepare village development project proposals, due to their thorough and diverse perspectives, they bring in a variety of initiative plans, which are usually overlooked by male planners. Women are more concerned with providing the daily necessities of different groups in their villages, especially women, the elderly and children (Institute of Technology for Social Development, 1997).

Furthermore, a number of differences and similarities between the two women council members can be identified. On the one hand, although their positions are similarly derived from their social resources, the categories of the resources are not identical. Whereas Sri was elected because of her long-standing role in providing services for her home village, Ya won the election due to her kinship networks, together with human resource of her educational qualification. In this respect, their being elected does not differ from the research outcome that members of the *Aw baw taw* Councils are elected due to their attributes, such as having kinship networks, competency in particular area, and making long-term contribution to the village (Institute of Technology for Social Development, 1997).

On the other hand, a number of similar factors are apparent in their election. For instance, both of them are no longer heavily occupied with the burdens of child care; Ya's children are in primary school and Sri's children are now adults and non-resident. Additionally, their husbands and families are supportive of their public involvement. Furthermore, it is obvious that while performing their duties outside the domestic domain, they still relate household tasks to their role in the sphere beyond the domestic domains. The extent to which cultural constructions of women's housework responsibilities remain dominant in men's as well as women's perceptions is apparent. Additionally, it is evident that, apart from increasing numbers of women participants, promoting gender equalities in local politics necessitates other strategies which are beyond the scope of my study.

(e) Two women with different room for manoeuvre

This section illustrates two cases of women who engage in development implementation with far different levels of resources, which accordingly impact on the level of resources they obtain from their involvement.

- *Nantha : a poor old widow*

(2.5) Nantha is a 74-year-old widow who supported her two daughters on her own by selling produce and working as a wage labourer. Due to her life of hard work, she considers herself the most unfortunate woman of her age in the village. After her husband died, his rice field in the village was taken by his relative and Nantha had to grow rice in her inherited rice field in her home village nearby. Her family worked in (4.2) Boonpha's mother's and (4.1) Jai's houses for about twenty years, as Jai and Nantha are from the same village. After her first daughter got married and moved to her home village, Nit, her remaining 48-year-old daughter became the family breadwinner by working as a rubber labourer. Meanwhile, Nantha helps her daughter collect rubber latex, as well as make thatches. Thereafter, Nantha had some conflicts with Jai and Boonpha and no longer interacts with them. Consequently, her family became active members of Chin's faction, the current *Phuyai ban*, as she claims that she and his mother are also from the same village. Nantha and Nit also closely relate themselves to Chan's family, one of the wealthiest and most respected families in the village, by actively assisting in his household tasks, and Nit works in his rubber plot.

Apart from encouraging Nit to be an *Aw saw maw*, Nantha herself is very keen on participating in village projects including Village Scout workshops, which were promoted in the 1980s according to the government's anti-Communists policy. Together with her overt admiration for the current Prime Minister and the Democrat Party, the key political party in the coalition government, this sharp-tongued and amazingly literate woman is also interested in following political news, as well as enjoying initiating and dominating superficial discussions of political topics with perplexed village listeners. In addition, she usually turns up in most village and district level public functions organised by the authorities to show her affiliation to the MP and the authorities.

In early 1998, at her own expense, she and a poor young widow in the village, as well as people from other villages in Koh Yai, paid a visit to the Prime Minister's mother who lives in a nearby province, as the famous elderly lady welcomes all well-wishers for her popular son. Nantha often brings up the topic of how intimately she interacted with the Prime Minister's mother in her conversations. In March 1998 when I told her that she appeared in a picture in the 1998 calendar produced and distributed by the MP, Nanta managed to get the calendar and hang it in front of her house. Indicating that people tend to misunderstand and criticise her for her impudence of holding the MP's hand, she clarifies that it actually happened the other way round.

- Urai : a well-to-do business-minded woman

(3.8) Urai, a 42-year-old woman, works in 5-rai of rubber plot inherited from her wealthy mother, as well as raises pigs, sells produce and makes thatches. She has a number of non-resident well-to-do siblings and relatives. Additionally, her uncle, the Deputy Director of a department in the Ministry of Justice, is highly respected in the district due to his consistent financial support of local activities. When Urai was very young, her father was killed. Then her mother remarried a man 15-years her younger, and they had a number of children. Although her step-father is respected for his active contribution to public projects, it is known that her mother is predominant in all the family matters. Like her mother, Urai plays a leading role in her family, as she considers herself more intelligent and competent than her husband, and he also accepts her capabilities.

In 1997 her step-father donated a plot of his land to be the location for the construction of a 1.5-million-Baht (£ 25,000) rubber-sheet producing house, which was supported by the Organisation of Rubber Replanting Aid Fund (ORRAF). Urai pointed out to the construction contractor in Songkhla that due to her potential inheritance of the land, which actually belonged to her mother and would be inherited to her, it would be most beneficial for him to have her mediate the construction work. Once the contractor agreed, despite objections from her mother and step-father, she and her husband were in charge of the recruitment of construction workers and buying construction materials, from which they received commission. Nevertheless, due to the substandard quality of the work, the committee members of the project did not approve its first phase completion, and the ORRAF had to tender for a new construction contractor. As the economic crisis drastically raised construction costs in 1997, no contractor was found. According to the ORRAF official in charge of the project, its completion seems very unlikely. After wasting almost half a million Baht on the project, its only outcomes are a constant flow of underground water from a 80-metre-deep hole and an unfinished building.

To an extent the approaches of both women in engaging in development implementation are similar, in the sense that they are based on their social resources, including kinship and extra-household networks, as well as gender ideologies. However, due to her scarce social and material resources, the extent to which Nantha could gain from her affiliations with a range of powerful figures seems limited. As mentioned before, she and her daughter foster their cliental relationships with their patrons by helping them in housework, the basic cultural construct of women's responsibility. In addition, apart from minimal material benefits she may occasionally gain from her involvement, her only significant profit is the feeling of earning social status in the village, which even villagers who are better off than herself cannot obtain. In contrast, Urai's influential kinship networks and her business competency, together with her relatively powerful position in her original family as the eldest and the only resident daughter who is supposed to inherit most land from her mother, enables her to take substantial benefits from the project. To a great extent, she could utilise her social identity as the dutiful daughter to claim her rights to control her mother's land as well as benefit from the land utilisation.

In other words, the extent to which women can benefit from utilising their resources of gender ideologies as well as kinship and extra-household networks is related to the material and social resources they have at their disposal. In turn, the resources they obtain are used for themselves and their families.

6. 5. 2. Women in village politics

Although it is evident that the women members of the *Aw baw taw* Council play a limited role in local development, the fact that particular women are significantly involved in the village politics is apparent from the elaboration of the two situations in this section.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, two village factions arose as a consequence of the 1996 *Phuyai ban* election campaign. Due to (3.5) Kua's strong personality and leading role in her influential kinship group, as well as in the campaign, she was the only one identified by the *Phuyai ban* as an opponent. In fact, Suthin, her husband, and other members in her kinship group also take active part in the faction due to their long-standing active involvement in development and public activities. As it is increasingly obvious that the *Phuyai ban* tends to neglect his duties and project activities, and that the poor project outcomes are allegedly related to his corruption, anger among Kua's faction members is rising. In the meantime, they have become disappointed that the seemingly active *Nai amphoe* who was transferred into the district in late 1997 has also developed a close relationship with the *Phuyai ban*, ignoring his corrupt behaviour. The following two situations describe the resistance of opposing factions to the authorities.

(a) "Let's eat together here" : the hidden political agenda

In early 1998 the *Phuyai ban* decided to hold a dinner party at his residence to welcome the *Nai amphoe* and his team who were to visit the village according to his village visit programme. Kua, Suthin and the faction's members disagreed with these arrangements, for they thought that the village function, which required all households to provide food to cater for the visitors, should be organised in the village public area. Consequently, Suthin suggested that Kua set up a get-together on the same evening in the Centre for

Village Public Health Service (CVPHS), located on the roadside opposite to their house on the way to the *Phuyai ban*'s residence. The couple prepared young sugar palm nuts from their rice fields and other ingredients. A group of women enjoyed cooking and eating food in the CVPHS, and all passing-by district officials, including the *Nai amphoe,* dropped in to greet them and taste their food before leaving for the *Phuyai ban*'s residence. Thereafter, the men left for the meeting; whereas the women participants had enjoyed themselves so much that they did not bother to attend the meeting and party, to which they had been invited by the *Phuyai ban* via the village loudspeaker.

(b) "We may not ram klong yaaw for you any more" : a negotiation of the powerless

In mid 1998 discontent increased regarding the *Nai amphoe*'s interest in the bull-fight gambling business together with a number of allegedly corrupt local leaders, and Kua's faction members became despondent about the village's future. Equally, some members of the *klong yaaw* group, led by Kua, felt that they were being taken advantage of by the *Nai amphoe*, as they are requested to perform in consecutive district functions without being paid or given any gifts, and a number of them complained directly to him and other officials. At the same time, Suthin, the Village Guard and Kua's husband, stated his disagreement with the *Nai amphoe*'s working style in district monthly meetings. His action was considered extremely unusual and unacceptable according to the bureaucratic rule. When another request for a *ram klong yaaw* performance was passed from the *Nai amphoe* via Suthin to his wife, Suthin told officials to talk to her directly. Nevertheless, while visiting me at my homestay house, adjacent to Kua's, the *Nai amphoe* did not take the opportunity to talk to her about his request. Thereafter, the *Phuyai ban* was told by the *Nai amphoe* to directly make such a request to Kua, but he did not do so for fear for losing face if she declined. Finally, a Community Development official paid a visit to Kua and asked her to contribute a performance to the district ceremony. After complaining about the inconsideration of the *Nai amphoe*, she finally agreed to provide a performance for the ceremony.

Both these examples of relatively "powerless" villagers challenging the authorities corresponds with the actor-oriented perspective on power. Even the victims of power are not passive, as they manage to make room for manoeuvre to attain a certain degree

of consent and negotiation, either in the front or backstage, both for a flickering moment or for long periods (Villarreal, 1992). In this respect, women's culturally-constructed skills of cooking and dancing, become instrumental in the conflict of power at the local level. However, such skills can be contextualised as a strategic challenge of power only when they are closely associated with women's substantial levels of material and social resources, such as Kua whose leading role in village groups is based on her strong personality and kinship networks.

However, the ability to manipulate such traditional social resources becomes marginalised in the state-dominated context. The significance of formal political power in the village is apparent in the case of (3.1) Wannee, described below, who struggled to fight against lucrative businesses.

(c) The forever muddy and bumpy road and Wannee's solo protest

This tiny woman in her late sixties has been in charge of all family errands for four decades due to her husband's disability. In the 1980s in order to get the road and electricity supply extended to her isolated house in the hilly area, she contributed 2 rai of her inherited land adjacent to her house to a public pond project despite some villagers' criticism that she was too generous. In early 1998 when a shrimp farming business, the first in the village, was established next to her vacant rice field, she went on her own to visit the *Nai amphoe* at the district office to protest against the pond construction for fear of her field being damaged by saline water. Thereafter, the *Nai amphoe* negotiated with the business owner, an outsider, permitting him to run the business for one year.

In mid 1998, when soil-loaded trucks severely damaged a dirt road to the soil quarries in the hilly areas close to her house, Wannee hung a rope across the road to obstruct the trucks trespassing on the road constructed on her contributed land. A number of local authorities, including the *Phuyai ban,* the soil selling business and quarry owners came to bargain with her in order to keep the road open. Finally, she agreed to sign a contract allowing them to use the road provided that they would repair the damage done and not damage the road in future.

It is unusual for an ordinary aged village woman to assert and protect her rights by initiating such legal actions. In this respect, Wannee's actions can be related to Vandergeest's (1993) notion that the institutions of national citizenship, particularly legal and educational systems, have inscribed the construction of individual rights in modern societies. Attempts to mobilise and regulate the peasantry through the discourses of nationalism and modernisation have led to a breakdown of traditional authority, as well as rendered individuals rights to struggle within the realm of the nation-state. However, her struggles only led to limited success, as the issue of poor road condition is associated with the local political power beyond the individual household resources.

In fact, a large number of villagers who commute to their rubber plots on a daily basis, as well as those who reside on the road sides, complain about its permanent poor condition, caused by soil-loaded trucks. A few weeks before I left the village, Ya, the female member of *Aw baw taw* Council, consulted me about how to plan a project proposal for village development to be requested from the 1999 budget of the Koh Yai *Aw baw taw*. When I discussed the proposal of a concrete road to replace the dirt bumpy road with villagers, all of them wholeheartedly agreed. However, most of them, including Ya herself, also doubted whether the project would be approved by the *Aw baw taw*, as the project would jeopardise the soil-selling business, and heavy soil-loaded trucks would not be allowed to pass on a concrete road. The other male member of the *Aw baw taw* Council is the son-in-law of a soil quarry owner, while the *Phuyai ban*, who is supposed to recommend proposed projects to the *Aw baw taw*, also plans to sell soil from his inherited land in the future. Finally, Ya dropped the idea and did not come to consult me about the project proposal again.

It is concluded that the resources available for village development have become concentrated in the hands of those who control formal political power and the authorities. Although women play an active role in exercising power via their kinship networks and legal knowledge, the extent of their success is limited to the micro level.

In summary, a number of related issues concerning women's involvement in the development process can be drawn from the above-mentioned cases.

First, a number of women play key roles in development activities according to familial relationships with village formal leaders, particularly the *Phuyai ban.* (4.1) Jai's experiences when her husband was the *Phuyai ban* are similar to those of Kum and other wives of *Phuyai ban's*, in the sense that they are expected to lead certain public activities assigned by the authorities, including women's development projects. Moreover, the wives of local formal leaders are expected to accommodate official visitors to their villages in order to assist in their husbands' duties. Such involvement can be defined as a type of women's "household service work", as it functions to anchor the family in the community. Their prominent participation in public activities is of significance in enhancing their husbands' social and cultural resources, as well as rendering upon themselves the same resources.

Second, women's involvement in development activities is mediated by cultural constructs of women's housework and femininity. Most women's involvement, which responds to the demands of the authorities, is related to reproduction work, such as preparing for and serving in social functions, as well as dancing to decorate formal processions. It is scarcely evident that women take the initiative or play a key role in making decisions concerning project activities. However, although most projects tend to meet the objectives of the authorities rather than contributing to women's development, for some women participants, such close connections with the authorities bring new categories of social and cultural resources for themselves and their households.

Third, it is noted that most women who play an active role in development activities have relatively high level of social and material resources at their disposal. As senior relatives in their large-scale kinship networks, they can draw on a high level of support and involvement from their relatives. Since participation in project activities demands time and a level of financial contribution, it is unlikely that women who are restricted by their financial situation can devote time to earning incomes in order to take part in projects.

Fourth, it is obvious that, apart from requiring having resources at their disposal, only women in the late phases of their family life cycle can get involved in development activities, as they are relieved from household tasks, particularly child care duties, or their household chores are delegated to their daughters or daughter-in-laws. In some cases, for example, (1.2) Phanna who has only one child, it was not until her elderly parents passed away that she became free from caring burdens and had more time to take part in development activities.

Finally, it is possible that the experience of participation in village projects can lead a number of women to further involvement in the development sphere. According to a number of development workers who have long-term experience in promoting women's participation in local development and politics, it is easier to involve members of women's groups into further participation, as they have already obtained the relevant social and management skills, as well as self-confidence from their group experiences. In other words, such participation can be a significant initial step for rural women to engage in public activities.

Conclusion

The first part of this chapter began with elaboration of the extent of the dynamics of household resource profiles affected by specific environmental change, the implementation of state policies and the market. A drastic decline in coastal rice fields was seen to be a consequence of environmental change caused by economic and technological changes. Consequently, the significant material resources in most household has changed from rice fields to rubber plots. It is evident that households have been differentially impacted by the promotion of high-yielding rubber, the educational system and financial loans. Households whose material and social resources are at a relatively high level can make long-term investments in human resources, and in return they obtain social prestige, a new type of cultural resource. Meanwhile, poor households are socially and economically constrained in such investments and gain least benefits. Although a number of development projects are launched in the village, only two of them, have affected the household resources.

It is evident that the livelihoods and well-being of the households rely on the state and the market. In addition to increasing dependence on material resources from the governmental financial agencies, the accumulation and transformation of household resources become significantly based on demand for food and supplies of modern production inputs from cities, as well as urban kinship networks. The prevalence of high levels of social and material resources becomes a crucial factor determining the levels of the accumulation of material resources. Consequently, social differentiation in the village has been significantly reinforced in the development process, and poor households become losers.

Women's duties to manage their family money have been reinforced by their predominant roles in the *Kloom om sub* and *Shares*, the new types of material resources introduced by the government and the market respectively. Material and human resources of poor households, particularly women's time and labour inputs, have been exploited as a cost-free source of reproduction of labour supply for urban sectors. In spite of the environmental, social and economic changes, patron-cliental patterns and reciprocal exchange rules remain the predominant forms of social relationships in the village. Women's reproduction work and their kinship and extra-household networks have been of significance in sustaining and building up social resources for themselves and their families.

Thereafter, the second part of this chapter delineates the extent to which women have responded to the changing village context by delineating women's involvement in development project implementation, as well as in village politics. It is evident that incorporating women's issues into the local decision-making process requires more than including women in local politics. A number of women play an active role in particular development projects, especially women's development activities, which are based on gender ideologies of women's housework and femininity, as well as those mobilised according to the WID mainstream policy. In spite of the inefficiency and limited impacts of many projects, it is undeniable that to an extent women participants obtain particular resources from their involvement. In addition to providing them a new category of cultural resource, such participation increases women's social resources,

even though the degree they gain varies according to their prevailing social and material resources.

Being manipulated in particular contexts with a high level of social resources, to an extent, women's domestic tasks can be considered instrumental as a challenge of power in village politics. However, in the changing village context where most decision-making concerning resource allocation for village development is concentrated with formal political power at the subdistrict and district levels, traditional social resources, particularly kinship networks, can only be employed for political agendas at the marginalised and micro level.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE POSITION OF WOMEN WITHIN THE CHANGING HOUSEHOLD CONTEXT

This chapter discusses the extent to which the position of women in households has been affected by changes at the household and village levels. The analysis draws on a range of household circumstances in all social groups and different generations, as well as the situations mentioned in Chapter 6. Initially, with reference to the conceptual framework in Chapter 3, the analysis concentrates on gender ideologies. Consequently, it incorporates intra-household gender relations issues, including sexual division of labour, power relations, and allocation of household resources, which are also mediated by cultural constructs.

7. 1. Gender Ideologies : Women's Social Identities

This section discusses the extent to which social and economic changes have impacted on gender ideologies, particularly village women's life worlds and their social identities as daughters and mothers.

7. 1. 1. Women's scope of identification in their life worlds

Evidence derived from my discussions with women indicates that they identify themselves as a social unit with their children. According to women' s self-rating scores of satisfaction in their family life cycles, major components of women's perceptions are associated with the burdens caused by their children and the different stages of the life cycle attained by their children. Most women attribute their low self-rating satisfaction scores to burdens caused by their children and disappointment about their children's

behaviour, as well as their husbands' drinking habits. Whereas high scores are mainly related to the attainments of their children, including their achieving particular levels of higher education, sending home remittances, sons' being ordained, and establishing their own families with a degree of economic security. Women's concerns about their husbands' drinking are also associated with its consequences for family income, which affects their children's well-being. In addition, when the women were asked about what they prayed for in their merit-making performances, common practices for women rather than men, most of their answers were concerned with their families' living standards, in particular those of children and grandchildren.

In spite of changes in their household resource profiles, households remain their primary life worlds for rural women, as the domestic domain is the focus of their daily production and reproduction tasks. Women in older generation have experienced such life worlds since they were born. As daughters they took part in household tasks as their mothers' assistants earning income and providing household services for their household members. After marriage, most of which were arranged by their parents, the women carry on fulfilling their duties for the well-being of their children. In the same way, although younger women tend to spend a period of their lives experiencing urban ways of life and make their own decision on marriage, when they return to the village and settle with their own families, their life worlds are similar to those of their mothers.

7. 1. 2. Traditional norms for daughters

According to Phongphaiboon (1992) and a number of elderly villagers, traditional norms for daughters are to get married and take care of their parents, whereas sons are expected to be ordained before establishing a family. Ensuring their daughters have a proper marriage and have children is the primary concern for all parents. The traditional characterisation of boys as "rice with the husk" and girls as "rice without the husk" reflects parents' need to pay careful attention to prevent their daughters from having premarital sex (Hnin, 1994: 23). A traditional Thai saying "having a daughter is like having a toilet in front of one's house" which means that it is necessary that one keeps the toilet clean, otherwise one can be defamed by its smell and filth. Thus, in the past young women were not allowed to take journeys without a chaperone.

Despite young women' s increasing physical mobility, the sayings still signify the social control over women's premarital sex, as well as social sanctions on parents to arrange a marriage for their daughters. The fact that they arranged proper marriages for their daughters is often mentioned with pride by elderly women. In contrast, a few women who ran away with their men tended to omit this part of their life stories in my interviews. Although younger women are inclined to make their own decisions about marriage, there are a few women, such as (2.5) Hansa's daughter and (3.2) Boonpha's daughter-in-law, who conformed to their parent's requests.

To a great extent, women's livelihoods and social advancement were traditionally dependent upon their marriage, as reflected in an oftcited piece of classical Thai literature *"I-Nao"* written by King Rama II in the early 1800s thus, "for a woman having a good husband is similar to having a crystal parasol to enhance her prestige." In fact, according to an expert in Thai literature, such a traditional imperative is reflected in almost all Thai classical literature (Thaned Wesapada, personal communication, 23 March 2000), and remains significant in the village.

Box 1 A mother's concern about the future of her single daughter

On the one hand, (2.5) Nantha expresses her pride that, due to her strong guidance, her two daughters have never been defamed with indecent affairs or running away with men despite her being a poor widow. On the other hand, she is worried that Nit, her 47-year-old single daughter, has minimal chance of marriage and will have no one to support her when she gets old and can no longer work. In early 1998 she took Nit to a spirit medium asking for his help. Finally, Nantha conceded that Nit should save as much as possible and get support from her niece or nephew.

In addition, my own single status was also questioned with a degree of concern by most villagers, particularly women, in relation to my having nobody to rely upon in the long run. Nevertheless, some women have come to accept that it is possible for a woman with a reasonable level of resources to live a single life, but not those from poor families.

Box 2 Single women living in the village

After her parents passed away in early 1998, Preeda, a single woman in her early fifties lived with her nieces in a house built by her single elder sister, an official who plans to return to the village after her retirement. The sisters earn a regular and sufficient income from rubber plots inherited from their parents. When their father died a few months after their mother, the sisters relied on their relative Somchai, the Phuchuay phuyai ban, to assist in arranging the funeral.

In other words, in addition to the traditional norm for women to have a family, complementary inputs from men and women are crucial for the maintenance and accumulation of village household resource profiles, which is discussed in the next section.

7. 1. 3. Reproduction of women's social identities as a mother in the development process

As mentioned in Chapter 3, due to Buddhist and traditional beliefs, women's status is based on their role as a mother, nurturing sons to be ordained and sustain Buddhism (Kirsch, 1982; Van Esterik, 1982a; Thitsa, 1983; Keyes, 1984; Mills, 1993; Hnin, 1994). In Marxist feminist views, Buddhism functions as the state's ideological apparatus, socialising women with the myth of domesticity, and that their aim in life is marriage, reproduction, and domestic work (Boonsue, 1989). According to Thitsa (1980), the traditional model of women has been sustained throughout Thai history by different social mechanisms, including Buddhism and official messages reproduced in different occasions, emphasising marriage and motherhood as the only real and worthwhile vocation for a female. Such gender ideologies are perpetuated not only in mass media (Kaewthep, 1994) but also in the development process, as it is elaborated in this section.

As mentioned in Chapter 6, women's development projects are based on the cultural constructions of women's housework responsibilities and femininity. Women's social significance highlighted by the authorities on the 1998 International Women's Day is

also concerned with their role as a mother and provider for their family members' well-being. A similar message was also emphasised by the address of the District Chief *[Nai amphoe]* and the awarding of outstanding mothers from all subdistricts on Mother's Day 1998 organised by the Department of Community Development.

At the same event the Koh Yai Women's Volunteer Group performed part of the Vassantara Jakata tale. The play focused on the fate of Princess Madsi, the wife of Prince Vessantara - the would-be "bodhisattava", who devotes her life to her husband (Satha-anand, 1997). Traditionally, in addition to Sita in Ramayana, Princess Madsi is a role model wife who always stays with her husband in good and bad times. In addition, the tale also emphasises that wives without husbands' protection live a disgraceful life (Maneerat, 1983). As the people were angry with Prince Vessantara's giving away the kingdom's precious white elephant to a rival kingdom, the royal couple and two children went into exile and lived in the forests. In order to attain spiritual enlightenment, Prince Vessantara gave their two children to Jujaka, while Princess Madsi was away fetching fruits for the family (Satha-anand, 1997). The play highlighted Princess Madsi' s lament for her two missing children and her love for them. Consequently, women's social identities as a mother are reproduced in the play.

In summary, in spite of changes in household resource profiles and the changing community context, the household remains the focus of women's daily production and reproduction work, and their life worlds mainly constitute the social unit of themselves and their children. Due to the reproduction of gender ideologies through different levels of institutions, as well as women's primary responsibilities for reproduction tasks in the domestic sphere, village women's social identities are based on their roles as daughters and mothers. Women's social identities as a mother influence the interpretations of their rights and needs in their household situations, which is described in the next sections.

7. 2. Gender/Sexual Division of Labour

This section elaborates the involvement of women and men in production and reproduction activities in households, observations which are mainly drawn from interviews with women. It describes the extent to which the activities and their contribution to livelihoods have been affected by social and economic changes.

7. 2. 1. Production

According to my observations, production work in households can be classified into the following four groups based on the time and labour inputs of women and men:

(a) Work requiring a high degree of men's physical strength

Slaughtering pigs and cows, catching fish in fish ponds or rice fields, and other activities that demand massive physical strength have traditionally been the responsibility of men. Wage labouring in construction work is also mainly as men's work. However, a few women, including (2.7) Sunee, were involved in the work for a short time due to financial pressures. In lean seasons some men are also employed for wage labouring in local areas. No change is evident in this type of work.

(b) Work with an equal input from women and men

As mentioned in Chapter 5, rice growing demanded the same levels of labour and time for both men and women, particularly in rice harvesting periods. Other work in this category ranges from fishing and shrimping, fetching firewood to make charcoal, tapping and processing rubber-sheet, mowing and putting fertiliser in rubber plots, growing seasonal fruits and vegetables, as well as taking cows to and from fields. In addition, catching, cooking and selling a species of edible seasonal insect during late April to mid-May, another significant source of annual supplementary earnings, necessitate labour inputs of men and women at different stages. During the last twenty years, technological development such as the off-board engine to be installed in fishing boats and the electric motor for rubber-sheet processing, reduces the time and labour required for tasks in most households.

(c) Work with a high degree of women's inputs

Women have been in charge of certain tasks, including betel-nut and coconut selling, thatch making, as well as pig and poultry rearing for generations. As mentioned in Chapter 5, due to increasing demand from cities, the villagers could earn more money from selling their home-based products. Such earnings are important sources of supplementary income, particularly in lean seasons. Only in a few households young male members climb up betel-nut and coconut trees to pick nuts, though most women hire few young male wage labourers. Most of the time women collect ripe betel nuts fallen on the ground, or pick coconuts by using a long stick themselves. Men in a few households cut and carry nippa palm leaves back home for their wives, but the majority of women take care of the whole process themselves. Nevertheless, when women are busy or away, men help feed pigs and clean pig pens. With respect to recent changes, apart from the introduction of less time- and labour-consuming pig-rearing methods mentioned in Chapter 5, there is no evidence of change in this category of work.

(d) Women's work only : petty trade of home-based products

As mentioned in Chapter 5, village women have played a prominent role in petty trading in weekly morning markets for generations. Women are in charge of the whole process, from preparing and cooking, to transporting and selling the products. Most materials, which include dry coconut and betel-nut stalks and dry sugar palm nuts as fuel, coconut meat and milk as ingredients, and banana and tree leaves as wrapping, are fetched from household and nearby areas. The cooking methods and materials involved have not changed for generations. In spite of complaints of high costs of materials bought from the local market, the women rarely give up such trade. They usually leave for business in a small group, and those without child care obligations or other household tasks tend to stay overnight in monastery areas for the entertainment. In annual temple fairs it is usual to see groups of middle-aged and elderly women spending day and night selling their produce and home-made products and enjoying themselves afterwards. Consequently, Karim's (1995) notion of Southeast Asian women is applicable that, as women's role of reproduction and production is converged in their households, they can enjoy a degree of autonomy of physical mobility.

Most women in the poor groups (three of the four women in the low social group and five of the eight women in the lower-middle social group, as well as two of the eight women in the higher-middle group), regularly sell home-made sweets and snacks at local funerals, temple fairs, and festivals, particularly in lean seasons. Selling home-made sweets and snacks remains a significant source of supplementary income for women in poor households.

In conclusion, although the significant material resource has been changed from rice fields to rubber plots, the production work remains unchanged. In addition to main occupations, women have also been responsible for a wide range of production work for supplementary income. During the last few decades households have been under greater financial pressures to invest in modernised means of production and human resources. Due to rise in urban demand for home-based products, most of which are the outcomes of women' s labour inputs, women's production work is of significance to bring in additional money to cover the increasing expenditures.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to emphasise that although women, particularly in poor households, play the predominant role in production work, collaboration between husband and wife in such work is significant for their households' livelihoods, as three female-headed households in the lower-middle social group show :

Box 3 Women's need for male household heads

(2.4) Nantha, a 74-year-old who has been head of her family since she was in her twenties, states that, "a family without a male head is like a ship without a rudder. Just like mine, but I have no alternative but to keep going.."

(2.5) Hansa, a widow in her fifties, whose husband died in an accident in 1995, has to shoulder all burdens on her own. The couple earned substantial income from fishing and shrimping, but she cannot work on her own. Although only two out of five children are studying, her income from sharing half of the income earned from having a rubber labourer work in her 6-rai of rubber plot is not sufficient to meet all expenditures, particularly in lean seasons. In 1996 she asked her eldest daughter, who

worked as a beautician while studying in a non-formal education system in a nearby province, to return home and help her take care of the family. Thereafter, she convinced her 22-year-old daughter to marry a young man from a well-to-do family in an adjacent village, and the couple lives in her house.

According to (2.7) Sunee, a 45-year-old woman who divorced her husband of a few years, being a young widowed or divorced woman is economically and socially constraining due to a tendency to be sexually threatened and stigmatised as being promiscuous. After a few years of struggling to support her son to finish a diploma, she finally decided to get married with a divorced man to gain his support. In order to assure his financial assistance, she invited the Phuyai ban of both her and his villages to witness their wedding. She states that, "there's no point to remarry if I cannot get him to help pay my debt".

In other words, although it is obvious that in most poor households women tend to contribute more time and labour to production, the necessity of having men as income-earners in their families is also vital for the households' livelihoods. To an extent, such complementarity of men and women in production work is also evident in particular well-to-do households.

Box 4 Complementarity of women's and men's inputs in production

According to (4.3) Jinda, her husband went fishing on his own during the first few years of marriage. When their children went to school, she could help her husband, and their income significantly increased.

Consequently, women take the economic and social necessity of having males' support into account when deciding whether to tolerate their husbands' behaviour. A few women also mention the necessity of remarrying, and are concerned about their children having problems with their second marriage. Such a consideration is evident in wives of both generations :

Box 5 Women's reasons for tolerating their husbands' behaviour

(1.2) Phanna divorced her husband when they were in their thirties after they fought about his frequent drinking. After a few days of separation, she returned to him due to her widowed mother's request. According to her mother, it was unlikely for a divorced woman to be able to live on her own without her husband's support. Subsequently, she has sustained her marriage despite their regular arguments about his drinking habit.

Since the beginning of her marriage, (2.4) Ladda, a tiny woman in her early sixties, has been unhappy with her husband's frequent drinking, and having to avoid being beaten when he was drunk. While working very hard, she was upset with his irresponsibility and thought about separation many times, but she concludes that,

> *"I was worried that the children were too young to live without their father. Then, when the children went to school and college, I became concerned that they would not finish their studies if we separated and he did not help support them. Finally, when the children are grown up, there's no point to divorce him any longer..."*

After relying on her husband's money for ten years, (3.4) Dawan was able to earn her own income and bear all household expenditures once their fourth child went to school. Without her husband's support, the 43-year-old bought her own property by rearing pigs, working as a rubber labourer, working her own rubber plot, and petty trading in town markets. In spite of her husband's irresponsibility, which are also criticised by other villagers, she does not want to divorce him for a number of reasons. She puts it that,

> *"I will have to remarry anyway if I separate from him, and my new husband may not be nice to my children. I don't want to cause problems for my kids. And I have to regularly leave home for a few days to go to the market. Who will help take care of my girls? My husband must be more considerate to our children than other villagers would, right? At least, I feel relieved that he stays home with the children..."*

Mukda, (2.2) Ratree's daughter-in-law, has put up with her husband's drinking and womanising for ten years. The couple worked as wage labourers in Songkhla and sent their two sons to live with her in-laws in the village. She has left him many times, but went back to him, as she was concerned about the possibility of taking care of their sons without his support. Now they have a third son, it is unlikely that she will divorce him in spite of their consistent arguments about his irresponsibility.

Ruay, (4.2) Jai's daughter-in-law, has tolerated her husband's promiscuity and drinking since the first few years of marriage when they worked in a factory in another province. After getting pregnant, she came back to her parents and decided to divorce him. But both her parents and in-laws persuaded her that it would be difficult for her child to have a step-father. Thereafter, with assistance from her in-laws, the couple reunited and work in their rubber plots, and have a second daughter. She puts a lot of effort into sustaining her family by pleasing her husband and urging him to work hard for their children's future.

In other words, the toleration of their husbands' behaviour by women of both generations is based on the social and economic necessity of having a man's provision and protection, which is also mediated through women's social identities as mothers who have ultimate responsibilities for their children's future.

To an extent, the above-mentioned accounts are not different from the general trend in Thai society. According to the General Family Survey conducted by Limanonda et al. (1995), the majority of respondents whose marriages were dissolved did not receive help from their former spouses. Whereas 34 % of male respondents receive financial support from their former wives, only 14 % of women gain such assistance from their former husbands. In addition, for respondents who had problems after marriage dissolution, 27 % of females compared to only 4 % of males accepted that they had financial problems. Furthermore, among those who were remarried, 50 % of males

indicated emotional incentive as their reasons, whereas 44 % of females had economic reasons as a major incentive for their remarriages.

In addition, particular bonds between wives and husbands are evident in the cases of women who reported their contentment with their marriages. (4.3) Jinda concludes that, "I can go fishing with my son now. But I feel something missing if my husband does not come along. We usually go fishing together." (4.1) Jai also notes that she feels secure to be accompanied by her husband while working or going elsewhere.

In conclusion, in spite of changes in the means of production and the significant material resources in households, women's active involvement in most production activities remains predominant, particularly in poor households. Due to rises in demand for modernised means of production and educational expenditures for children, households are under greater financial pressures. Meanwhile, due to increasing urban demand for home-based products, most of which are the outcomes of women's labour inputs, women's supplementary earning is of significance to cover greater expenditures in their households. Nevertheless, in addition to the gender ideologies, the complementarity of wife and husband is indispensable for the sustenance and accumulation of household resources. For a village woman, a man's contribution is of significance in terms of provision of resources as well as social protection for their households. Surviving as a female-headed household is perceived as extremely difficult both in economic and cultural terms. Thus, women have little alternative but to accept the behaviour of their husbands.

7. 2 .2. Reproduction

As reproduction is defined as activities for sustaining the well-being of household members, the term includes all household chores, ranging from cleaning, cooking, to taking care of children, the ill and elderly members. According to my observations, the contribution of women's reproduction work to their households' livelihoods can be categorised into the following five functions:

(a) Cooking as a significant source of supplementary income

As mentioned before, with different degrees of regularity, most women in poor households are petty traders selling home-made sweets and snacks, especially in lean seasons. The income is of significance for their households' daily expenses.

(b) The sustenance of household members

Women have been in charge of reproduction tasks for generations, and to an extent they seem to consider such responsibilities secondary to production work. A few women mention that it was only the first few years of marriage that they did not work as hard as their husbands, as they spent most time taking care of their young children and could scarcely earn any income.

Box 7 Women' s perceptions of men' s and women's work

(2.2) Ratree and (2.3) Nuan note that in spite of their rice-growing tasks and petty trading, their husbands' wage labouring in town means the men work harder. In brief, like most women, (4.1) Jai concludes that,

> *"Men work outside home, whereas women work both inside and outside. Men's work consumes more strength but is finished within a short period of time, while women's work is continuous and trifling. All in all, men and women work equally hard..."*

All women identify household tasks as their duties without requesting men's assistance. Only a few young wives expect to have their husbands help in household chores, but very few get such support.

Box 8 Younger women's housework responsibilities

In addition to working with her husband in rubber plots, Ruay, (4.2) Jai's daughter-in-law, takes care of all household chores and their two young daughters' homework. Despite her feeling of being taken advantage of by her husband, she never contradicts him by demanding his help in household chores. With her initiation and financial support from his parents, the young couple set up a grocery in early 1998 while still working in the rubber plots and selling rubber latex. Consequently, Ruay asked her husband to lower his expectations of her household services, due to her increased burdens.

Before the economic crisis, Sudjai, (3.4) Niem's daughter-in-law, worked in Hat Yai with her husband in a furniture factory for ten years. The couple moved to live with her in-laws and work in his inherited rubber plot in 1997. Her husband helps her do most household chores, which surprised his mother. Sudjai emphasises the necessity of the couple's sharing all kinds of work equally.

Nevertheless, according to my interviews, as a few women in the old generation witness their daughters or daughters-in-law being assisted in household tasks by their husbands, they admit that despite similar double burdens, the younger women's tasks are not as heavy as theirs.

According to Phongphaiboon (1992), the traditional norms that daughters are skillful and diligent in housework remain significant in Southern rural communities. Particular housework responsibilities have been specifically socialised through generations of women. Young daughters are gradually trained to substitute for their mothers and grandmothers in handling such domestic tasks, as the skill is considered a significant aspect of women's quality. Although teenage sons in a few households learn to do household tasks when they live in cities, they are not expected to help when they come back home.

To a great extent, the traditional norm that women are predominantly responsible for housework has remained influential in Thai society. According to the General Family Survey conducted by Limanonda et al. (1995), a large proportion of female respondents tend to provide reasons why men should not do housework. Such responses indicate that the sexual division of labour in Thai families remains tied in with gender roles and it is unrealistic to expect a substantial change in the near future.

However, it is also evident that not all women are content with the situations of division of labour in their households. When women who identify themselves as family leaders, were asked their feelings about shouldering the double burdens of production and reproduction, their answers indicate a degree of depression and concession :

Box 9 Women's expressions of their husbands' behaviour

(2.4) Ladda, who plays a key role in income-earning activities by petty trading, growing rice and rearing pigs, whereas her husband stays home helping her work, states that,

"..I used to feel so upset with my life that I often cried like a grilling turtle.."

(3.1) Wannee, who has been the household head for about forty years since her husband is incapable of work, concludes that,

"..I gave up thinking about my burdens to avoid getting a heart problem, otherwise I would die of it.."

(3.2) Chantha, a woman in her early sixties, has been actively engaged in rubber-sheet processing work, as well as all kinds of supplementary earning activities for their three sons' education, whereas her husband concentrates on work in their rubber plots and drinking. She accepts that,

"..I felt beyond the level of feeling upset, but it is useless to complain to anyone. Just keep going.."

(3.4) Dawan whose husband is too ignorant to share family responsibilities and expenditures concedes that,

> *"..I just learn to feel content with whatever he gives me and take it as it is, but it took me twelve years to reach this point of feeling.."*

Furthermore, as Papanek (1979) and Sharma (1986) state, the maintenance of households requires not only financial and domestic inputs but also "household service work", which is significant to the class position of particular households. The next sections summarise women's reproduction work as instrumental in building up and sustaining social resources of their households, which are signified in Chapter 6.

(c) Reproduction work as a means for fostering a household's social resources

In spite of some technological improvements, women's kitchen work remains crucial in social functions as part of reciprocal exchanges among village households. Moreover. catering services provided by women also represent a service that cliental households provide for their patrons, as it is necessary for rubber labourers to maintain good relationships with owners of rubber plots by providing such extra services.

(d) Reproduction work in non-domestic contexts

The expectation that women provide reproduction services is also evident beyond the domestic sphere. An example of this was provided in Chapter 6 where two female members of the Subdistrict Administrative Organisation *[Aw baw taw]* Council prepared for and cleaned up after a party held by the *Aw baw taw* without expecting their male colleagues' assistance. In addition, based on a particular manipulator's social resources, women's cooking can be instrumental in power conflicts. Furthermore, in households of local leaders, women's catering duty is of significance in the maintenance and accumulation of their husbands' social resources.

It is evident that in spite of particular changes in household resource profiles, most decision-making in which women remain dominant is based on obligations, or second-order choices which are mediated by cultural constructs and the traditional sexual division of labour. A number of women, particularly those in poor families, have to take the initiative in decision-making due to their husbands' limited responsibilities. In other words, in many family circumstances women's decision-making tends to be "implementing" rather than "orchestrating" power.

7. 3. 2. Demarcation of women's power vis-à-vis their husbands

In spite of matrilocality, women's predominant input in production and reproduction work, and their ownership of property, the circumstances in most households indicate the limits on women's power vis-à-vis their husbands. Women's power is mainly demarcated by their conflicts and shaped perceptions of men's drinking behaviour.

According to women's self-rating scores of satisfaction about their family life cycles, two common causes of their low scores are financial pressures and their husbands' frequent drinking. As mentioned in Chapter 6, in addition to limited material resources, human resources in many poor households are constrained and affected by men's drinking behaviour. The consequences of men's frequent drinking are the primary concerns for wives in such households, as women have to bear the income earning burden when drunk men cannot work for a few days. Nevertheless, according to two focus group discussions, the women concede they are unlikely to prevent their men drinking, and therefore they merely want men to limit their drinking to a degree that it would not affect their working capabilities and family income on a regular basis. However, the extent to which their desires can be fulfilled seems limited in most circumstances. Furthermore, women are unable to fetch their husbands from their drinking groups, as they are afraid of being embarrassed, humiliated, or even beaten by their drunk men. Meanwhile, a number of women, including most of those who identify themselves as family leader, keep away from their drunk husbands to avoid arguments.

In this respect, Lukes' (1974) concept of three-dimensional power is applicable to demarcate the women's power. A number of women, particularly in poor households,

have overt conflicts with their husbands concerning the men's drinking behaviour, which affects the households' material and human resources. Meanwhile, the way women in well-to-do households concede with their husbands' drinking habits can be related to the third dimension of latent power, the fact that they cannot see any other alternatives to change the men's behaviour. Consequently, despite their matrilocality, ownership of inherited property, and their role as family leaders, as well as changes in household resource profiles, the ways that women deal with their husbands' drinking continue to indicate their limited power.

7. 3. 3. Women's bargaining power

Drawing on the above-mentioned household circumstances, this section discusses the extent of women's bargaining power based on Sen's (1990) Cooperative-Conflict Approach.

The key concepts of the approach as concluded by Kabeer (1994: 110) are that,

> "...Differences in bargaining power between members (or categories of members) are the product of interlocking asymmetries, including the range of options facing members, should household cooperation break down (the fall-back position); the perceived significance (illusory or otherwise) of their contributions to household prosperity; the degree to which members identify their self-interest with their personal being (and therefore the extent to which they are prepared to subordinate their own well-being to that of others), and finally the ability of some members to exercise coercion, threat or violence over others..."

With respect to their perceived contribution, most women in poor households identify themselves as family leaders who make the most contribution to their children's livelihoods due to their husbands' limited responsibilities. Meanwhile, all women consider themselves as taking the initiative in all income-earning activities due to their concerns about the well-being of their children. However, as mentioned before, women in Ban Khao Bua relate their well-being to that of their children, which is not different from Bangladeshi women who are dominated by gender ideologies and economic relations into perceiving their interests as being inseparable from those of their children

(White, 1992; Osmani, 1996; Kabeer, 1997). That is, due to the women's social identities as a mother, they are fully aware of the indispensability of their husbands' provision and protection. Consequently, their fall-back position is vulnerable. In other words, irrespective of changes in household resource profiles, women's bargaining power vis-à-vis their husbands remains limited.

7. 3. 4. Women's room for manoeuvre vis-à-vis men's drinking behaviour

To an extent, women have to concede to their husbands' drinking behaviour. However, according to the actor-oriented perspective, their acquiescence is by no means passive. Therefore, drawing on my interviews and observations, this section delineates the extent to which women make room for manoeuvre vis-à-vis their husbands by illustrating women's responses to their men's drinking behaviour.

(a) Requesting behavioural improvements

The primary strategy which almost all women use, though they tend to eventually become disheartened, is to beseech their husbands to reduce the frequency of their drinking and to take more responsibility for their children. Such a strategy is also employed by women in the younger generation, particularly those who are in subordinate position. However, only a few women seem to be successful in this regard.

Box 10 Women's requesting for men's behavioural improvements

According to (3.7) Kanya and (3.8) Urai, it took them ten years to convince their husbands to gradually decrease the frequency of their drinking from severe to normal levels, but they are still often upset by the level of their drinking.

(2.7) Sunee complains that, by beseeching her husband, she has succeeded in improving his personal hygiene, but not his drinking habits.

According to Mukda and Ruay, (2.2) Ratree's and Ruay, (4.1) Jai's daughters-in-law, they put great efforts into convincing their husbands to take more responsibility for their children, particularly as they decided not to divorce their husbands for the sake of their children.

(b) Reducing the degree/possibility of the men's drinking

As family-money managers, women attempt to reduce money available for their husbands' drinking expenses, or to ensure that, despite drinking, the men are still able to work the next day. In most situations, the women negotiate their payments by giving the men less money for different reasons.

Box 11 Women's attempts to reduce men's drinking degree/possibility

According to (3.2) Chantha, it is vital to give her husband some money as his work incentives. One evening we were sitting together after she had just received a 500 Baht note from selling thatches. Her husband came to ask for money to buy a battery which cost about 70 Baht. She carefully kept the money in her hand and looked for a 100 Baht note in a drawer and gave that to him, as she knew that he would spend any change buying alcohol.

When villagers arranged a 2-day trip to a funeral in a nearby province, (3.4) Niem told her husband that since the car would be packed with women, it would be more convenient for her to go to the funeral and he stay at home. In fact, she knew that if he had gone the funeral, he would have enjoyed drinking and not come back within the two days, and the family would be short of income for a few days.

(c) Taking revenge by reprimanding their husbands

When the above-mentioned strategies fail to limit men's drinking, they return home drunk and not able to work the next day. Their wives keep silent and wait until they recover from their drunkenness. Thereafter, angry wives reprimand the men for their drinking and irresponsibility. Some of them consider the reprimand their only retaliation, as they have to keep quiet while the men are drunk to avoid fighting or being beaten. Although some men keep silent while being reprimanded, such verbal revenge

does not change their drinking behaviour. It is noted that most women who take such revenge are those who identify themselves as family leaders.

In other words, such a reaction represents the defiance of women afforded to them by their relative bargaining power. Women's relatively higher levels of material resources and labour inputs in household production seem to be significant to their revengeful responses to their husbands, as is apparent in the following section.

(d) Turning a cold shoulder to their husbands

Box 12 Women's turning a cold shoulder to their husbands

When the men are too drunk to work for a few days, a few women including (1.2) Phanna, (2.5) Sunee and (3.4) Niem tend to turn a cold shoulder to their husbands for a period of time. In fact, Niem quarreled with her husband about his drinking habit during the first ten years of their marriage, but finally gave up her arguments. However, she is still too angry to talk to him for a few weeks after his drinking, though she still provides food for him. Only Sunee declines to cook for her husband while she is angry with him, as she realises that she owns the house where her husband and their children live, as well as an old motorcycle which he uses.

In addition, sexual sanctions also seem to be instrumental in tension periods between women and their husbands, though it is not stated in most cases, as sex issue is a private topic in Thai culture. Only very few women disclose this issue. (1.2) Phanna mentions that it is important for a wife to comply to her husband's sexual needs to ensure his obedience, while (3.5) Kua reveals that she does not allow her husband to sleep with her when they fight.

In conclusion, irrespective of changes in household resource profiles, the strategies which women employ to make room for manoeuvre vary with the scales of their resources in comparison with their husbands', the men's and the women's own personalities, as well as the contexts. Therefore, although women put great efforts into controlling such circumstances, the extent to which they can manipulate their men's

drinking behaviour seems limited, particularly when they own minimal resources. Consequently, such circumstances are in line with Kandiyoti' s (1998) notion that women's acts of resistance are primarily framed by the terms of the already existing contract. Moreover, some acts of resistance can be interpreted as part and parcel of the maintenance of systems of domination, as they provide spaces where subordinates may legitimately "let off steam" and acquire a breathing space. Consequently, the action scarcely leads to a renegotiation of conjugal or labour contracts, but produces relief within them (Kandiyoti, 1998).

7. 3. 5. Women's power in the family life cycle

In addition to power relations between women and their husbands, it is evident that the extent to which women exercise their power vis-à-vis other family members is based upon their particular resources. When women are in the late phases of their family life cycles, their position in the hierarchy of familial relationships becomes of significance to other members due to a number of factors, apart from their seniority.

Box 13 Senior women's power in their families

Thorn, (3.3) On's 74-year-old mother, has been a widow for fifty years. Her daughter's family live in her house and earn the family income from the land she gave them. She was in charge of the family money for a long time before handing over her responsibility to her daughter. Thorn was dominant in deciding and arranging a marriage for her grandson. She played a key role in persuading him to abandon his lover, while ignoring her son-in-law's disagreement. She wanted to get the young man to settle in a wealthy family so that he could support his original family in the long run. She then arranged all marriage matters, including relentlessly obstructing his lover's attempt to visit him.

As it is mentioned in Chapter 6, Hom, (4.2) Boonpha's 73-year-old mother, in spite of her younger relatives' and her husband's disagreements and son-in-law's passivity, played a key role in influencing her kinship networks to support Phien, her grandson, in the 1996 Phuyai ban election.. In addition to visiting every household to solicit votes, she was the one who made the final decision to provide money to buy votes.

Although (3.2) Chantha rarely speaks to Phayao, her daughter-in-law whom she blames for her youngest son's dropping out of education, the young woman who shares the house with her in-laws tends to serve and treat her properly. Chantha supported the young couple in renting rice fields in Phayao's home village, as well as building a new house for them opposite to her. Moreover, when Phayao became aware of her husband's frequent aggressive drunkenness, and that only her father-in-law could handle him, she realises that sustaining good relationships with her in-laws was beneficial to her, in spite of her frustration with her mother-in-law.

Although (2.2) Ratree's first son and his wife earn their income from a rubber plot inherited from her, she receives only limited support from his family, due to conflicts between her and her daughter-in-law. In contrast, in spite of her frustration with her in-laws, Mukda, Ratree's second daughter-in-law, never contradicts them, as she realises that they help bring up her three sons and allow her family to share the small house.

In conclusion, women are generally well-regarded by their younger family members, particularly daughters-in-law, not only because of their senior position, but also their ownership of material resources, which directly renders them a high degree of power. Such circumstances underpin Kandiyoti's (1998) notion that as gender relations fluctuate throughout the life cycle, they render varied and changing possibilities for power and autonomy even for the relatively disadvantaged, and that,

> "...Experiences of gendered power are not merely fractured by class, race and ethnicity but by the complicated emotional (and material) calculus implied by different organisations of the domestic realm through women's and men's unfolding life cycles.."
>
> (Kandiyoti, 1998 : 144)

In summary, a number of issues concerning intra-household power relations can be drawn from the above-mentioned accounts. In spite of changes in the household resource profiles and the village, intra-household power relations of the two generations of households have not been significantly changed. On the one hand, due to matrilocal social relations, ownership of property and women's predominant role in production work, women, especially those in the higher-middle and high social groups, can wield power within the family, particularly when their seniority renders them top position in the hierarchy of familial relationships. On the other hand, the extent of power of most women in both generations is demarcated by their toleration of their husbands' drinking behaviour. Moreover, despite their leading role and ownership of household resources, their husbands' frequent drinking behaviour is a controversial issue for most women in all social groups. Women in poor households in particular have to bear more family burdens, as their scarce material and human resources are dissipated by men' s drinking behaviour. Furthermore, in spite of recognition of their contribution to the livelihoods of their families, the extent of women's bargaining power is limited, as their perceived interests are related to the well-being of their children. As women are fully aware of the social and economic necessity of having a man's provision and protection, their fall-back position is limited. In other words, they perceive co-operation rather than conflict as crucial to maintain their husbands' contribution to their households. However, as power is fluid and contextualised, it is evident that to an extent, women make room for manoeuvre in response to their husbands' behaviour, depending upon levels of resources they have at their disposal.

7. 4. Allocation of Household Resources : The Management of Family Money

This section discusses the extent to which household resources, including land inheritance, educational opportunities, and the management of family money in particular, have been affected by social and economic changes.

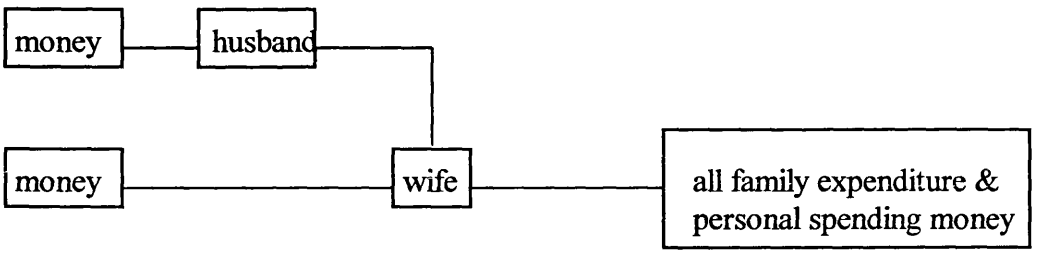
As far as traditional land inheritance is concerned, parents tend to give equal amounts of land to both sons and daughters, though a daughter whom elderly parents depend upon would inherit more land than her siblings. In addition, when households put greater efforts into transforming material into human resources, daughters have been increasingly encouraged to obtain higher education. However, when resources are scarce sons tend to be given priority with regard to this opportunity. The village circumstances correspond with the general trend observed in Thailand. According to Archavanitkul and Havanon' s (1995) review of a number of studies in different parts of Thailand, daughters and sons have the same inheritance rights. However, parents who have limited resources tend to send their sons to secondary school rather then their daughters.

The extent to which the pattern of management of family money in most households is related to social and economic changes, as well as women's autonomy and gender ideologies, is discussed in the following section.

7. 4. 1. Pattern of family money management and the autonomy of women

According to the focus group discussions, women are responsible for keeping family money, with the exception of two households : (2.2) Ratree whose husband keeps family savings to pay debts, and (3.6) Dawan whose husband keeps his own income and does not share any household expenditures. The other households adopt a whole wage system of wife management with two earners (Pahl, 1983).

Figure 7.1 the whole wage system : wife management - two earners



Source Pahl (1983 : 286)

The system of the wife's management of pooled income does not necessarily indicate a high degree of women's power, as it is widely accepted among villagers that having wives keep family money is more beneficial to all family members' livelihoods. Due to women's social identities as a mother, they attempt to manage family money to meet all items of household expenditures. Thus, they tend to be more concerned about their households' financial situations, and put more effort into earning money than their husbands. Furthermore, as mentioned in Chapter 6, due to the increasing demand for material resources for investments in modernised means of production and children's educational expenditures, the women's traditional responsibilities have been reinforced by their predominant role in borrowing money from the *Kloom omsub* and involvement in a number of *Shares*, the new types of material resources brought in by the government and the urban influence respectively. In the meantime, due to their wives' money-managing responsibilities, the men are left with only a few daily expenses, such as buying alcohol and tobacco, for which they ask money from their wives who are not supposed to say no to them in most circumstances.

Richter and Havanon (1995) argue, from their analyses of the 1988 Socioeconomic Survey conducted by the National Statistical Office of Thailand, that participation in economic activities and management of the household budget may not necessarily indicate women's economic security. Women's ability to maintain their households depends upon not only how much they work but also on the amount of their earnings. Furthermore, according to qualitative analysis of the study, women's actual decisions on

household expenditures are constrained by norms and their bargaining power over household material resources. According to cultural definition, a good wife is expected not only to manage the budget effectively, but also to be able to fulfill other household members' demands, particularly their husbands'. In spite of a limited money pool, it is rare for a wife to refuse her husband's request for his personal expenses.

To a great extent, women's financial autonomy is related to the surplus of their households' material resources. Women in poor households in particular face the worst financial pressures, and are left with little money for their own personal expenses. Some poor women, for instance (1.1) Amphai, (1.2) Phanna, (2.2) Ratree, and (2.8) Anchan, indicate that they have had to sell their few pieces of jewellery to solve the households' financial problems. Similarly, women in the higher-middle social groups who have to support children through higher education, such as (3.3) On and (3.7) Kua encounter similar constraints. In contrast, those in well-to-do households, who have minimal financial burdens caused by their children's educational expenditures, can afford to buy jewellery and other personal items without the need for permissions from their husbands. The situation is similar in the households of the young generation. It is evident that women in the higher-middle and high social groups enjoy financial autonomy to the extent that their households are not economically constrained.

In addition, it is undeniable that women's ability to earn their own incomes provides them a certain degree of autonomy, as indicated by the feeling of insecurity caused by economic dependence expressed by three women of the young generation :

Box 14 Women's insecure feeling caused by their economic dependency

(2.2) Ratree's daughter-in-law, (2.4) Ladda's daughter, and (2.8) Anchan's daughter whose child-care burdens inhibit them from earning their own incomes for a period of time express their frustration of depending on their husbands' income.

In fact, wives who bring in money tend to have more say in the allocation of household resources than do non-earning wives. However, due to the gender ideologies, the household situations in Ban Khao Bua is not different from a substantial number of

studies mentioned by Young (1992). That is, it does not indicate that the higher the wife's contribution to the total household budget, the greater her say in the disposition of the joint income, nor does she exercise greater control over joint income.

7. 4. 2. The pooled household resources and the ideologies of maternal altruism

Although it is evident that, in addition to mothers' thrift, all family money is pooled to support their children, different household circumstances are noted in a few cases.

Box 15 Conflicts between women and their second husbands over household resources

When (2.5) Nantha, a widow, was in her thirties, she lived with a widowed man. But she separated from him after a short while, as they often argued about his taking her money to support his children.

(2.7) Sunee often argues with her second husband, as he never trusts her to share food with his two daughters who live in her house. She concludes that, due to her second marriage, she understands the reason why the elderly try to forbid women from getting a divorce. It is more likely for divorced women to have conflicts with their second husbands, who tend to be divorced or widowed men, about allocating household resources between the children of both parties. Although Sunee used to rear pigs prior to her second marriage, she gave up the work due to her awareness that she was bearing most burdens herself while pooling her income for family expenditures. Consequently, she takes part in a few Shares to pay the debt she secretly borrowed for her son, as she considers that it is most likely that her son, rather than her step-children, will take care of her in her old age.

Conflicts between women and their second husbands in relation to the allocation of household resources to their step-children signify the specific relationships between mothers and their own children, which are based on interrelated economic and emotional factors.

Referring to Ann Whitehead's (1981) concept of "ideologies of maternal altruism", Kabeer (1997) concludes from her study on women in garment factories in Bangladesh that expenditure on children is one of the primary forms of altruistic expenditure for the women. This notion is also applicable to substantiate my analysis of women in Ban Khao Bua. As mentioned before, since women's fortunes are bound up with the fortunes of the household collectivity, it is likely that their long-term interests would be better served through forms of altruistic behaviour. In a context where families represent a general insurance against all forms of insecurity, altruistic expenditure can be considered an investment in the women's own future by rendering them a secure place within the family and their ability to call on the loyalty of family members. The women's desire to earn a better life for their children can be explained with the complex, and inseparable interweaving of love, altruism, tenderness, self-sacrifice and material self-interests that constitute familial relationships (Kabeer, 1997 : 265 - 266).

According to Archavanitkul and Havanon' s (1995) review of a number of family studies in Thailand, despite declines in parent's expectations of economic assistance from their children during their school years, expectations for economic support from adult children, particularly those who are single, still remain predominant. With respect to the village households, although it is evident that a large number of them cannot significantly depend on their children's support, particularly after the children get married, it is still likely that in their old age they will have one child live with and take care of them.

In conclusion, the traditional pattern of women's managing family money has been reinforced by the implementation of the *Kloom omsub* project and *Shares,* as well as changes in household resource profiles. However, women's predominant role in managing family money is not necessarily translated into power, though to an extent it signifies their says in family matters. Women's social identities as a mother not only signify their need to earn and manage family money to meet all expenditures, but also underly their right to spend the money for personal expenses, which is evident in few cases who have surplus resources at their disposal. In addition, the concept of "ideologies of maternal altruism" is employed to explain their devotion to their children.

Conclusion

This chapter discusses the extent to which changes in household resource profiles and the changing village context, induced by the interplay of the state and the market, have impacted on the position of women in households. The analysis focuses on gender ideologies and the inter-related components of intra-household gender relations, including the gender/sexual division of labour, power relations, and the allocation of household resources, which are also mediated by gender ideologies and women's social identities as a mother.

In spite of the environmental, social and economic changes, gender ideologies underlying women's social identities as dutiful daughters and nurturing mothers remain predominant in women's lives. For a woman, setting up a family with a proper marriage sanctioned by her parents is a cultural imperative, as well as social and economic necessity for attaining life-long security. Women's social identities as a mother have been reproduced through different social institutions, including the development process. Despite changes in household resource profiles, gender ideologies remain significant in mediating the nature and extent of gender/sexual division of labour, women's power relations vis-à-vis their husbands, and the management of family money.

Women's long-standing involvement in production and reproduction activities has not been significantly affected by changes in significant material resources and the transformation of material into human resources in most households. Nevertheless, a few time- and labour-consuming production and reproduction tasks have been made easier by technological improvements. As dramatic rises in need for cash to invest in household resources are evident, two factors significantly contribute to the perpetuation of women's roles in managing resources for their households. Firstly, women's traditional responsibilities for managing family money have been reinforced by their predominant roles in the *Kloom omsub* and *Shares,* new sources of material resources introduced by the state and the market. Consequently, they are consistently concerned with earning income to meet all the household expenditures. Secondly, due to

increasing urban market demand for home-based products, most of which have been outputs of women's work for generations, namely pigs, thatches, betel nuts and coconuts, women are motivated to earn more supplementary income for their families.

Due to limited household resources, as well as increasing financial pressures for the investments in modernised means of production and human resources, particularly when husbands are insufficiently responsible for their families, poor women have to take the initiative in leading their families. Furthermore, a convergence of women's production and reproduction tasks within the household enables women to earn supplementary money for their households. Such a convergence renders women a degree of autonomy in terms of physical mobility and decision-making. Additionally, women's reproduction duties remain crucial in sustaining and building up social resources for their households. In fact, the social and economic significance of women's reproduction work is substantially extended beyond the domestic domain to wider social contexts.

Despite matrilocality, women's ownership of inherited property, and their contribution to their household livelihoods; women's limited power vis-à-vis their husbands is evident in the great extent of their toleration of men's drinking behaviour. Women's ability to make decisions about most dimensions of household errands are concerned with the "implementation" rather than the "orchestration" of power. Most of their predominant decision-making, particularly in poor households, is based on obligations rather than choices. Women's limited bargaining power is mainly associated with their fall-back position and perceived interests, which are based upon the material and social necessity of having husbands' support for their children's well-being. However, to an extent, women, particularly those who identify themselves as family leaders, can make room for manoeuvre, though such acts of resistance by no means represent a renegotiation of the conjugal contract. Despite changes in household resource profiles, it is evident that power relations between women and their husbands are not significantly different between the two generations. In addition, due to their ownership of relatively high levels of resources and the top position they hold in the familial hierarchy, the extent to which senior women can wield power vis-à-vis younger family members is also apparent.

With respect to the allocation of household resources, due to traditional norms, daughters and sons inherit equal amount of land from their parents. As schooling has become a crucial source of human resources, women of the young generation tend to be granted equal educational opportunities. In spite of changes in household resource profiles, the system of wives' management of family money remains predominant in most households. However, the system does not necessarily indicate women's control over family money. As household income is pooled in women's hands for their household members' well-being, the women are in charge of managing the money to cover all items of expenditures. Any financial autonomy enjoyed by women is related to the surplus of material resources in their household. However, when households face financial pressures, most women tend to have to sacrifice their personal expenditures. In addition, such devotion is associated with ideologies of maternal altruism, as maternal affection and economic necessity are interrelated in a social context where support from children appears to be the most reliable source of life-long insurance.

In conclusion, Kabeer's (1997) description of women's subordination being related to the extent to which women rely on male provision and protection is applicable to the case of Ban Khao Bua women. Due to gender ideologies of women's housework responsibilities and women's social identities as a mother, women in all social groups have played an active role in production and reproduction work for their households for generations. Although a large number of women, particularly those in poor households, are forced by limited material resources, as well as their husbands' behaviour, to take the initiative in providing for their children, it is vital for them to sustain co-operation with their husbands. Women have been economically and socially constrained to sustain their reliance on a man's provision and protection for the well-being of their children and themselves. In other words, in spite of the traditional saying, "men are an elephant's front legs, and women are its hind legs", evidence from the village households indicates that irrespective of changes in household resource profiles and the changing village context, it is indeed "the hind legs of the elephant" that the livelihoods and well-being of households have primarily relied upon.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

This final chapter relates research findings and implications to the wider context of Thai society. The first section summarises the research findings derived from the preceding chapters. The extent to which particular issues can be related to feminist concepts is also discussed. Finally, research implications and relevance based on the findings are considered.

8. 1. Research Findings

This section focuses on research findings by summarising the impacts of environmental, social and economic changes, as consequences within the development process, on household resource profiles, as well as on women in different social and age groups; and the ways with which women have responded to them.

8. 1. 1. Social differentiation : changes in household resource profiles

During the last thirty years issues concerning uneven development in Thailand, particularly at the macro level, have been the focus of study among academics. As Parnwell and Arghiros (1996 : 2) argue :

> "..Uneven development is the manifestation in space (i.e. between places, sectors and people) of the problem of unequal access to natural, social, political and economic resources..."

This thesis investigates the extent to which the process of uneven development has been reinforced at the grassroots level. It explores and explains the existence and persistence of social differentiation of village households by examining the roles that the state and the market have played at the village level. Drawing on significant changes in the village and household resource profiles, this thesis argues that uneven development is a socially determined, on-going and dynamic process reinforced by different forms of public and private intervention over a period of time (Parnwell and Arghiros, 1996 : 3).

The changes during the last thirty years in Ban Khao Bua, a village in the Songkhla Lake Basin area in Southern Thailand, can be understood within the context of the multiple components of the interplay of the state and the market, including the implementation of the governmental policies at national and local levels, and the demand and supply of the market economy.

The village households were classified into low, lower-middle, higher-middle, and high social groups according to their material and human resources. As far as the impacts of the state on the households are concerned, the differentiation of households has been reinforced by the promotion of high-yielding rubber, the educational system, and financial loans. A drastic decline in coastal rice fields was seen to be a consequence of environmental change caused by economic and technological changes. In addition, due to the promotion of high-yielding rubber and financial loans, the significant material resources in most household has changed from rice fields to rubber plots. Households whose material resources are at a high level were able to make greater investments in rubber cultivation and thus they build up their material resources.

Due to the promotion of the educational system, together with increasing market demand for educational qualifications, households have put the greatest efforts into transforming material into human resources by supporting their children through higher education. On the one hand, unlike their parents, the younger generation could rely on different sources of income outside the village due to their educational credentials. On the other hand, only households whose material and social resources are at a relatively high level could make long-term investments for their children's educational attainment and social mobility. In return they obtain social prestige, which is considered as a new

type of cultural resource. Meanwhile, poor households are socially and economically constrained in such investments and gain the least benefit. Moreover, due to their limited human, material and social resources, children of the poor households are likely to become part of the cheap labour supply to the cities. As child-care provision is not incorporated into social policy, urban working couples have to rely on their village parents to take care of their young children. In this respect, poor village households are exploited as cost-free sources of reproduction of labour supply for urban sectors.

As far as development projects are concerned, only two have affected material resources in most households. A training course for rubber tapping skills and the *Kloom omsub* have reinforced women's active roles in production and managing family money respectively.

Regarding the impacts of the market on the households, close connections between the village and city have been increasingly significant to the dynamics of household resource profiles. The maintenance and accumulation of households' material resources have been associated with their productivity, depending on levels of market demand and investments in modernised means of production. Only households whose material and social resources are at a relatively high level could afford to make more investments and gain more profits in return. The expansion of kinship networks to urban areas is crucial for households' sending the younger generation to study or work. Access to new lucrative businesses, prestigious occupations, as well as formal local leadership positions, is limited to a few households who own not only high levels of material resources, but also influential kinship networks.

Thus, in addition to the prevailing household resources, the impacts of the interplay of the state and the market on the community have reinforced the social differentiation among village households. Furthermore, the social differentiation has also underlied the differentiation of village women. In addition to the prevalence of their household resource profiles, the social differentiation of women is based on their accessibility to new types of resources derived from the implementation of development policies, as shall be discussed in the next sections.

In spite of the changes at the household and community levels, reciprocal exchange and patron-cliental pattern of social relationships remain crucial social resources for the households. However, the significance of traditional cultural resources based on active involvement in Buddhist activities in the local temple has decreased due to the decline in social and cultural functions of the temple. As well as directing local cultural activities, the domination of the state in the village is increasingly evident from the extent to which particular administrative and economic/development groups have become significant in the village context. However, despite the decentralisation of policy to the *Aw baw taw*, decision making concerning village development projects have been concentrated in the hands of a few formal local leaders and the authorities, and the level of public participation is minimal.

8. 1. 2. Gender ideologies : women's social identities

The physical mobility of young women is no longer restricted despite the existing traditional norm of preventing women's pre-marital sex. Almost all women in the younger generation left the village to study or work in cities for some period of time before returning to set up a family. However, in spite of social and economic changes, traditional gender ideologies of women's housework responsibilities and establishing a family remain significant in village women's lives. For a woman, setting up a family with a proper marriage sanctioned by her parents is a cultural imperative, as well as social and economic necessity for attaining life-long security. The household has been the life world of village women, as the primary location of production and reproduction tasks for which they are predominantly responsible. Women's social identities as dutiful daughters and nurturing mothers have been reproduced through different levels of social institutions, including the development process. Consequently, women, particularly those in poor households whose resources are at a low level, have to bear most of the family burdens, and endeavour for co-operations rather than conflicts with their husbands, while tolerating their husbands' behaviour. However, the fact that women who have a high level of material and social resources at their disposal can utilise their social identities for their own and their households' benefits is also evident.

It is necessary to emphasise that in spite of significant changes in the village and the household resource profiles, the gender ideologies remain crucial in mediating the nature and extent of gender/sexual division of labour inside and outside the home, women's power relations vis-à-vis their husbands, and the management of family money in households. Thus, the objectives of women's development policy cannot be fully achieved, unless the existence and persistence of gender ideologies in women's as well as men's everyday lives and social mechanisms are examined and taken into account.

8. 1. 3. Women's responses to the changes

This section summarises women's responses to the changing village and household contexts by focusing on their involvement in development activities and their position in the households, which are mediated through gender ideologies.

(a) Women's involvement in development implementation

To an extent, modernisation has brought about a higher standard of living for most villagers, as well as releasing women from labour-intensive and time-consuming household tasks. To an extent, most village women have become optimistic about the changes in the village and their families regardless of the increasing economic pressures. Their predominant involvement in *Shares* and *Kloom omsub*, which have been introduced into the village by the market and the state respectively, becomes of significance in managing material resources to meet greater expenditures in their families.

It was not until the 1980s that women became involved in development programmes and projects. Women's development activities are mainly based on the gender ideologies of women's housework responsibilities and femininity. It is not evident that women take the initiative or play a key role in making decisions concerning project activities, and most projects tend to meet the objectives of the authorities rather than contributing to women's development. However, to an extent, close connections with the authorities bring new categories of social and cultural resources for the women and their households, depending upon social and material resources particular women have at their disposal. A few women play key roles in development activities due to their

familial relationships with village leaders, particularly the *Phuyai ban.* Nevertheless, it is unlikely that women from the poorest group would be able to take part in women's development projects, as participation demands time and a level of financial contribution. Furthermore, only women in the late phases of their family life cycle can participate in development activities due to their being relieved from household tasks. To an extent, the experience of participation in village projects provides women with social and management skills, as well as self-confidence, enabling their further involvement in the development sphere.

(b) Women in local politics

Although women's participation in the *Aw Baw Taw* is evident, it has not led to gender equalities in the decision-making process, let alone the incorporation of gender issues into the local development agenda, which requires more than including women in local politics. Indeed, the perpetuation of gender ideologies of women's housework responsibilities is apparent beyond the domestic domain. Being manipulated in particular contexts with a high level of material and social resources, to an extent, the cultural constructs of women, femininity and domestic tasks can be considered instrumental as a challenge of power in village politics. However, in the changing village context, it is evident that most decision-making concerning resource allocation for village development is concentrated with formal political power at the subdistrict and district levels. Thus, the extent to which traditional social resources, particularly kinship networks, can be employed for political agendas becomes marginalised.

(c) The position of women in households

It is apparent that during the last twenty years the households have been under greater financial pressures for increasing investments in modernised means of production and human resources. The analysis of the position of women in such a changing household context is based on multiple and interrelated concepts of intra-household gender relations, including the gender/sexual division of labour, power relations and allocation of household resources, particularly the management of family money. The extent to which the gender ideologies are of significance as the underlying factor determining the position of women is also discussed.

- Gender/Sexual division of labour

In spite of changes in household resource profiles, women's labour inputs into a range of production work, particularly home-based tasks, have been crucial for the maintenance and accumulation of material resources in most households. Due to limited household resources, particularly when husbands are insufficiently responsible for their families, poor women have to take the initiative in leading their families. Furthermore, a convergence of women's production and reproduction tasks within the household enables women to earn supplementary money to cover greater expenditures in their households. Such a convergence yields women a degree of autonomy in terms of physical mobility and decision-making. Additionally, women's reproduction duties remain crucial in sustaining and building up social resources for their households. Due to its function as "household service work", the social and economic significance of women's reproduction work is substantially extended beyond the domestic domain to wider social contexts. In addition, women's reproduction responsibilities are exploited as cost-free sources of reproduction of labour supply for urban sectors.

- Power relations in the household

It is evident that power relations between women and their husbands are not significantly different between the generations irrespective of changes in household resource profiles. Despite matrilocality, women's ownership of inherited property, and their contribution to their household livelihoods; women's limited power vis-à-vis their husbands is evident in the great extent of their toleration of men's drinking behaviour. Women's decision-making within the household is restricted to obligations and the delegation of men's responsibilities rather than reflecting their own autonomy. Women's limited bargaining power is mainly associated with their fall-back positions and perceived interests, which are based upon the material and social necessity of having husbands' support for their children's well-being. To an extent, women, particularly those who identify themselves as family leaders, can make room for manoeuvre, though such acts of resistance by no means represent a renegotiation of the conjugal contract. In addition, due to their ownership of relatively high levels of resources and the top

positions they hold in the familial hierarchy, the extent to which senior women can wield power vis-à-vis younger family members is also apparent.

- Allocation of household resources : the management of family money

Due to traditional norms, daughters and sons inherit equal amount of land from their parents. As schooling has become a crucial source of human resources, women of the young generation tend to be granted equal educational opportunities. In spite of changes in household resource profiles, the traditional pattern of the wife's management of family money has been reinforced by their predominant involvement in *Kloom omsub* and *Shares*. However, the system does not necessarily indicate women's control over family money. As household income is pooled in women's hands for their household members' well-being, the women are in charge of managing the money to cover all items of expenditures. Any financial autonomy enjoyed by women is related to the surplus of material resources in their household. However, as households face greater financial pressures caused by higher investments in material and human resources, most women tend to have to sacrifice their personal expenditures. Such devotion is associated with ideologies of maternal altruism, as maternal affection and economic necessity are interrelated in a social context where support from children appears to be the most reliable source of life-long insurance.

In summary, in spite of changes in household resource profiles and the changing village context, women's contribution to the maintenance and accumulation of resources for their households remains significant, particularly in poor households. However, their power vis-à-vis their husbands is limited by gender ideologies, as well as the social and economic necessity of depending upon their husbands' provision and protection.

8. 2. Conceptual Relevance

The extent to which the research findings are relevant to feminist concepts and research is discussed in this section. Most of this discussion is also significant for women's development policy to be discussed in the following section.

8. 2. 1. Women are not a single social category

It is apparent from the research findings that village women are differentiated by their households' material, social and cultural resources, which are the particular social relations they are embedded in. The extent to which women in various age groups are affected by and benefit from the development process is also differentiated by their social and material resources. Mohanty (1998 : 83) emphasises that Third World women are not a coherent group, "..they are constituted as women through the complex interaction between class, culture, religion, and other ideological institutions and frameworks.."

As far as feminism is concerned, Moore (1988 : 198) concludes that,

> "...The differences between women are important, and they need to be acknowledged because it cannot be part of a feminist politics for one group of women to speak on behalf of another. The important point is that, although women' s experience, circumstances and difficulties do overlap with those of other women, they are not isomorphic with them..."

8. 2. 2. The unrecognised significance of women's reproduction work

In spite of the social differentiation of women, it is evident that despite being unrecognised, reproduction work, which has been culturally assigned to women in all social groups, has been socially and economically crucial to sustain and build up household resource profiles. Thus, the research findings substantiate Sen' s (1999 : 689) identification of the causes of women's subordination. That is, the existing gender systems incorporate two related ways: (1) non-recognition of a "care economy" which

shapes the resources, labour and ideologies, as well as contributing to the reproduction of human beings in both daily and generational terms; and (2) unequal division of and access to resources, division of labour within and outside the home, as well as related ideologies and behavioural norms.

In addition, it is necessary to take into account Molyneux 's (1979 : 22) argument that,

> "...Neither an understanding of women's subordination, nor the politics of overcoming it, can be derived from analyses of domestic labour alone... (it) cannot be reduced to economic or material factors alone, even when these are conceived in the broadest terms; it also entails consideration of the important work currently being carried out in the field of psycho-analysis, sexuality, language and ideology..."

8. 2. 3. Women and the household as their social unit

My research findings indicate that village women's life worlds constitute not only themselves but also their family members, particularly their children. Women utilise their resources not only for their own but also their households' benefits. A long-standing Thai feminist, Hantrakul (1999) draws on her observations of two meetings of women from different social groups (village women leaders and feminist academics/activists) to argue that the discourses of "family" are significantly different between the two groups. For village women leaders, who have played a key role in people's protests against governmental development projects to protect natural resources for their families and communities, the term "family" incorporates their husbands, children, parents, as well as cattle and farms. It is the centre of activities for its members and other beings, as well as the motivation for different kinds of actions. In contrast, "family" is mainly defined by middle-class feminist academics and activists as a location of unequal power relations between husband and wife where women are violated and deprived of their rights.

Sharma (1986 : 197-198) concludes from her research on urban households in Shimla, Northern India, that in India, as well as most Third World counties, the household is a necessary reality in a community, and very few alternatives to a family based household

is available. It is unrealistic to emphasise sexual individualism and autonomy from men as promoted by Western feminists.

In this respect, Molyneux (1998) argues that it is necessary to see individual women as social beings, that women's commitment to family and kin is not totally morally based or completely without self-interest. Due to women's "embeddedness" in social relations, women do not display selfless altruism or give up their interests, but are social beings who ".. reconcile the conflicting desires stimulated by affect and caring on the one hand and by self-fulfillment outside the home on the other..." (Molyneux, 1998: 81). This issue is also significant for the following section.

8. 2. 4. The interrelation of cultural construction and social relations

The extent to which the gender ideologies of women's housework responsibilities and social identities as a mother underlie the components of intra-household gender relations is apparent from the household circumstances and women's toleration of men's behaviour. To an extent, my research findings correspond with those of Ram (1992). She concludes from her research on Mukkuvar women that

> "..Culture does not cease to play a crucially formative and shaping role with the advent of capitalism. Despite the loss of control over the organisation of production and domestic life in the community, culture is mediating the very process of capitalist transformation among the Mukkuvars..."
>
> (Ram, 1992 : 235)

In the same way Kabeer (1999 : 441) relates the concept of consciousness to the way people perceive their needs and interests, which is also shaped by their individual histories and everyday realities, as well as the material and social contexts of their experience. Some needs and interests are self-evident, as they emerge from the routine practices of daily life. Whereas other needs and interests derive from a "deeper" level of reality, which is inscribed in the taken-for-granted rules, norms and customs within which everyday life is conducted. Kabeer (1999) also associates this deeper reality with Bourdieu' s (1977) concept of "doxa", the aspects of tradition and beliefs which exist

beyond discourse or argumentation. As far as the situations of Ban Khao Bua women are concerned, their devotion to their households' well-being and toleration of their husbands are based on both self-evident needs and interests as well as the "doxa", or the deeper reality of women's social identities.

Consequently, in addition to an analysis of economic factors, a full understanding of the position of women requires approaches that identify the gender division as well as present versions of gendered identity as "hegemonic", both in the sense of being endowed with cultural legitimacy and being bolstered by a multiplicity of social institutions (Kandiyoti, 1998 : 144).

8. 3. Research Implications

This section relates the research findings to the wider social context, and discusses the extent to which particular findings can be associated with women's development issues.

8. 3. 1. Generalisation of the findings

This section elaborates the extent to which the findings are applicable to the situations of other Thai villages. In fact, generalisation of qualitative research is not a question of "..whether it can be done at all, but *from* what one can reasonably generalise *to* what..." (Platt, 1988 : 17). Hammersley (1992) notes that although it is a legitimate means by which ethnography can make itself relevant to a larger population, generalisation necessitates reflection and clarity about the population and time period to which the generalisation is attempted. Meanwhile, it requires specific use of aggregate data generated by survey research, and/or systematic coordination of ethnographic studies to sample across populations and over time.

According to Phongpaichit and Baker (1995), during the last few decades most old Thai peasantry was distributed at some point on the spectrum between being absorbed into an urban-based economy and cultures as producers or labourers, and being peasant families remaining on the forest fringe and living semi-subsistence lives. As far as Ban Khao Bua is concerned, it can also be located on this spectrum, as a long-settled small

community where material resources of most households are still derived from their long-term natural resource base, though their ways of life are dependent upon the market economy and state mechanisms. Households are the primary unit of production and consumption, where men and women share the burdens of production, and women are primarily responsible for reproduction work. Despite certain conflicts and ecological effects caused by the use of natural resources, their social resources are still significantly based on a high degree of reciprocal exchange and interdependence between community members.

To an extent, it is possible that the research findings concerning the position of women in the changing village context can be related to rural Thai communities with similar characteristics. As mentioned in chapters 6 and 7, the evidence of men's drinking behaviour as one of the major causes of family problems and the fact that gender ideologies maintain women's housework responsibilities are substantiated by a number of studies in Thai society. Nevertheless, it is necessary that ethnographic studies be undertaken for villages in different parts of Thailand to shape an overall understanding of the relationship between changes and the position of women at the household and community levels.

According to Kittiprapas (1999), it is estimated by the NESDB that the number of the poor has increased since the onset of the crisis, and income distribution has worsened. Rural poor families, who account for 72.5 percent of the poor in Thailand, are affected by lost remittance income. As far as Ban Khao Bua is concerned, during my fieldwork period between 1997 - mid-1998 the impacts of economic crisis and ecological problems on village households were not yet obvious, and rubber sheet prices had not yet plunged to less than 20 Baht (Pence 33) a kilogram as happened in 1998 - 1999. Had such drastic changes adversely impacted household resource profiles, the position of women may have been different.

8. 3. 2. Policy relevance

With respect to the relevance of my research findings to women's development policy, Hammersley's (1992) argument is significant. He argues that the limits of the contribution that any research can make to practice should be recognised, as research does not simply produce knowledge that can be applied to solve practical problems. In the light of their experiences, practitioners are the ones who assess and decide to use research findings in accordance with their contextual knowledge and practical judgment.

As a Thai who is deeply aware of the complicated social and political constraints on the development process in her own society, I had difficulty in drawing rhetorical policy implications from my research findings. To a great extent, the co-existence of the patron-cliental democracy and privileged capitalism in the Thai social and economic systems (Thanapornpan, 1999) has disintegrated rural communities. Additionally, due to the onset of economic crisis, the government has cut the social services, and the poor are directly affected by the decline in the public and social service budget (Kittiprapas, 1999). According to Bangprapa-Thitiprasert (1998), due to the existing inferiority of and discrimination against women in Thai society, it is evident that the economic crisis has affected women more adversely than men.

However, as mentioned before, social movements have significantly emerged to challenge the mainstream development paradigm, and Bello et al.'s (1998: 250) recommendations are noteworthy. They argue that it is a great challenge for the social movements to bring together a development proposal that combines the redistribution of wealth, political stability, and ecological sustainability into a visionary and pragmatic programme, as well as to wed such a programme into a political strategy for change which brings all disadvantaged social groups into a broad alliance for change.

As far as women's development policy in Thailand is concerned, it is crucial that women be considered as agents of development and their rights to equitable participation in the decision-making process be recognised (Parnwell and Arghiros, 1996: 22). Within the context of fledging development alternatives and women's development campaigns, a number of my research findings can be related to particular recommendations

concerning women's development issues taken from the experiences of feminist academics and activists.

(a) Promotion of the significance of women's reproduction work

In spite of increasing international efforts to measure the contribution of women's paid and unpaid work since the 1985 Nairobi Conference that culminated in the UN Decade for Women (Beneria 1997: 113), the social and economic significance of women's reproduction work which has contributed to Thai society remains largely unrecognised. Kanchana-aksorn (1999) states that, due to the growth-oriented development approach, women's production role is promoted in the development process for its exchange value, whereas the use value and burden of women's reproduction work in households are neglected. The fact that women bear most of the hidden costs of the reproduction of labour and labour forces for the market economy through their traditional duties of cooking, taking care of young children, doing household chores is not publicly recognised and valued. As women are loaded with the double burden of production and reproduction work, not only are they themselves deprived of individual rights and opportunities for self development, but the extent to which Thai society as a whole can benefit from the outcomes of women's development is also limited. Furthermore, maternal welfare and child-care services should be incorporated into social policy as basic welfare provision for workers. Meanwhile, it is also crucial to campaign for an alteration of gender ideologies so that both women and men be responsible for reproduction work, though such a situation will take a long time to achieve.

(b) Promotion of gender and social equities

As mentioned before, women tend to identify their well-being with that of their families. Chaemsanit (1999) notes that grassroots women activists are motivated by their concerns with their families' and communities' livelihoods and well-being to play a key role in environmental protests and social movements. For women villagers, the concept of gender equity is closely related to social equity in ecological, socio-economic and political dimensions. A study on village women who have been actively involved in development projects, undertaken by Northern and Northeastern NGOs, also indicates similar women's motivation for participation (Samart and Bundid, 1999). Women have been socialised to make a contribution not only to themselves as individuals, but also to

their family members. Thus, the promotion of gender equity for grassroots women needs to be closely associated with social equity.

(c) Promotion of women's involvement in the political decision-making process

The attainment of the long-term goal of promotion of women's development necessitates a number of short-term actions at the local and national levels. As the 1994 Act of Subdistrict Administrative Organisation and the campaigning process for the 1998 Constitution during the last few years have rendered more opportunities for women's public participation, a greater number of women's networks, development projects and NGOs have taken part in promoting women's participation in politics (Kanchana-aksorn, 1999; Chaithaweep, 1999; Chaemsanit, 1999). Consequently, it is likely that an increasing number of women will be actively involved in decision-making processes at different levels in the years to come. Corresponding with Chaemsanit's (1999) and Samart and Bundid's (1999) studies of village women leaders who have played a key role in grassroots protests and development projects, my research findings indicate that the promotion of women's public involvement requires the following strategies :

(1) Promotion of women's public speaking skills

Village women leaders have to make great efforts to learn the art of public speaking. Women tend to lack the self confidence required for public presentation, as their experiences are limited to their families and kinship networks. Consequently, it is necessary to provide village women with training courses to learn public speaking skills.

(2) Promotion of a role model of women's leadership

Due to the traditional division of labour and gender ideologies, women tend to play a supportive role rather than a key role in community projects. Therefore, it is unusual for villagers to accommodate women's leadership, and it takes a long time for women leaders to be accepted by their community members. Based on women's concerns with their families' and community's livelihoods, women's projects can lead to public

recognition of women's leadership, and therefore changes in gender relations and gender equality in the long run.

(3) Taking women's reproduction role into account in the promotion of women's development

Women's public involvement can be constrained by their commitment to their families' livelihoods and reproduction tasks. Therefore, it is crucial that women's development projects take not only women's production work, but also women's reproduction tasks into account in planning in order to achieve active participation of women in all social groups. However, unless women's reproduction workloads are shared by men, it is likely that a third burden of women's public participation on their shoulders will be too much. In other words, it is necessary that the promotion of women's public involvement corresponds with alteration of the traditional gender ideologies of women's housework responsibilities.

It is also necessary to take Molyneux's (1998 : 84) conclusion into account that,

> "...For many feminists in the developing countries the important issue is how to develop a feminist politics which can also promote a general project of social justice. This implies some commitment to the principle of equality and to universal principles of citizenship, but in a way which does not presume an undifferentiated public with identical needs and interests".

In summary, this ethnographic study illuminates the extent to which the interplay of the state and the market has brought about changes in a long-settled Southern Thai village during the last three decades. Changes in the village and household resource profiles have significantly reinforced social differentiation of the village households, determining that different levels of resource endowments have influenced the way that households have been able to respond to increasing demand for investments in human resources and modernised means of production. Meanwhile, gender ideologies of women's housework responsibilities and social identities as a mother remain significant in the development process. In spite of significant environmental, social and economic

changes in the village, as well as changes in household resource profiles, women continue to be responsible for both production and reproduction work. They have also been predominantly in charge of managing the family money for the livelihoods and well-being of their household members. Regardless of their control over resources and their leading role within their families, women's limited power vis-à-vis their husbands is based on gender ideologies as well as the social and economic necessity of having a husband's provision and protection. As mothers, the reproduction work that women have contributed to their families has been significant not only to their households, but also to Thai society in general. In other words, in the changing village context where the traditional saying "men are the front legs of the elephant, and women are the hind legs" has persisted throughout the development era, "the elephant" has actually been standing on its "hind legs".

APPENDICES
AND
BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDIX I

A FACT FILE OF THAILAND ON HOUSEHOLD AND GENDER ISSUES

	1980	1985	1990	1997
GNP per capita (US$)	720	810	1,520	2,740
(UK£)	450	506	950	1,712
Population				
Total (millions)	46.7	51.1	55.6	60.6
Female population (% of total)	49.9	49.9	49.9	50.0
Life expectancy at birth (years)				
Male	61	-	66	66
Female	66	-	71	72
Adult illteracy rate (% of people aged 15+)				
Male	8	6	4	3
Female	17	14	9	7
Total fertility rate (birth per woman)	3.5	-	2.2	1.7

Source : Adjusted from netscape (http://genderstats.worldbank.org/SummaryGender.asp?WhichRpt=country&City=THA,Thailand, 2000)

Households

(The 1997 survey of the National Statistical Office)

Average size 3.7 persons

Average monthly income 180 £

Average monthly expenses 153 £

Source : *Laetai* (April), 1999 : 44.

Differentiation of average household monthly income (%)

Monthly income (£)	Numbers of household (%)
Less than 84 £	37.8
84 - 166 £	31.3
167 - 333 £	19.9
Greater than 334 £	11.0
Total	100.0

Source : *Laetai* (April), 1999 : 44.

Employed Population by Industry (1997)

in millions (Percent)

Industry	Female (Per cent)	Male (Per cent)	Total (Per cent)
-Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting and Fishing	5.11 (16.87)	6.83 (22.57)	11.94 (39.44)
- Manufacturing	2.44 (8.06)	2.55 (8.43)	5.00 (16.50)
- Commerce	2.25 (7.82)	2.24 (7.38)	4.60 (15.20)
- Service	2.25 (7.43)	2.15 (7.09)	4.40 (14.53)
- Others	0.74 (2.44)	3.59 (11.85)	4.33 (14.30)
Total (Percent)	12.91 (42.64)	17.36 (57.35)	30.26 (100.00)

There are more women than men in the commerce and service sectors.

Source : Report of the Labour Force Survey, op.cit.

Reference : Gender and Development Institute, undated, *The Fact Sheet on Gender in Thailand.*

Politics and Administration at the National Level (1998)

	Total Number	Female (Per cent)	Male (Per cent)
National Govenment			
- Member of Parliament [1]	389	6.0	94.0
- Senator [1]	259	8.0	92.0
- Cabinet Member [2]	49	2.0	98.0
- Judge [3]	2,416	18.0	82..0
- Attorney [4]	1,674	12.0	88.0
Civil Servant Executive : [5]			
- Permanent Secretary	14	0.0	100.0
- Director General	98	9.2	91.8
- Deputy Director General	249	15.2	84.8

Source : [1] Registration Division, the Secretariat of the National Assembly, Bangkok

[2] Office of the Permanent Secretary, the Prime Minister Office, Bangkok

[3] Office of the Judical Affairs, Ministry of Justice, bankok

[4] Office of the Attorney-General, Bangkok

[5] Office of the Civil Service Commission, the Prime Minister Office, Bangkok

Reference : Gender and Development Institute, undated, op cit.

Politics and Adminsitration at the Local Level (1998)

	Total number	Famale (%)	Male (%)
Provincial Government			
- Provincial Governor	75	1.0	99.0
- District Officer	974	0.1	99.9
- Deputy District Officer	5,965	8.0	92.0
Elected Local Government			
- Provincial Council Member	2,148	6.3	93.7
- Municipality Council Member	2,112	6.0	94.0
- Sub-district Head	7,204	2.0	98.0
- Village Head	61,162	2.0	98.0
- Subdistrict Administrative Organisatiion (TAO) Members	189,219	7.9	92.1

About two percent of subdistrict heads and village heads are women.

Source : Department of Local Adminsitration, Ministry of Interior, Bangkok.

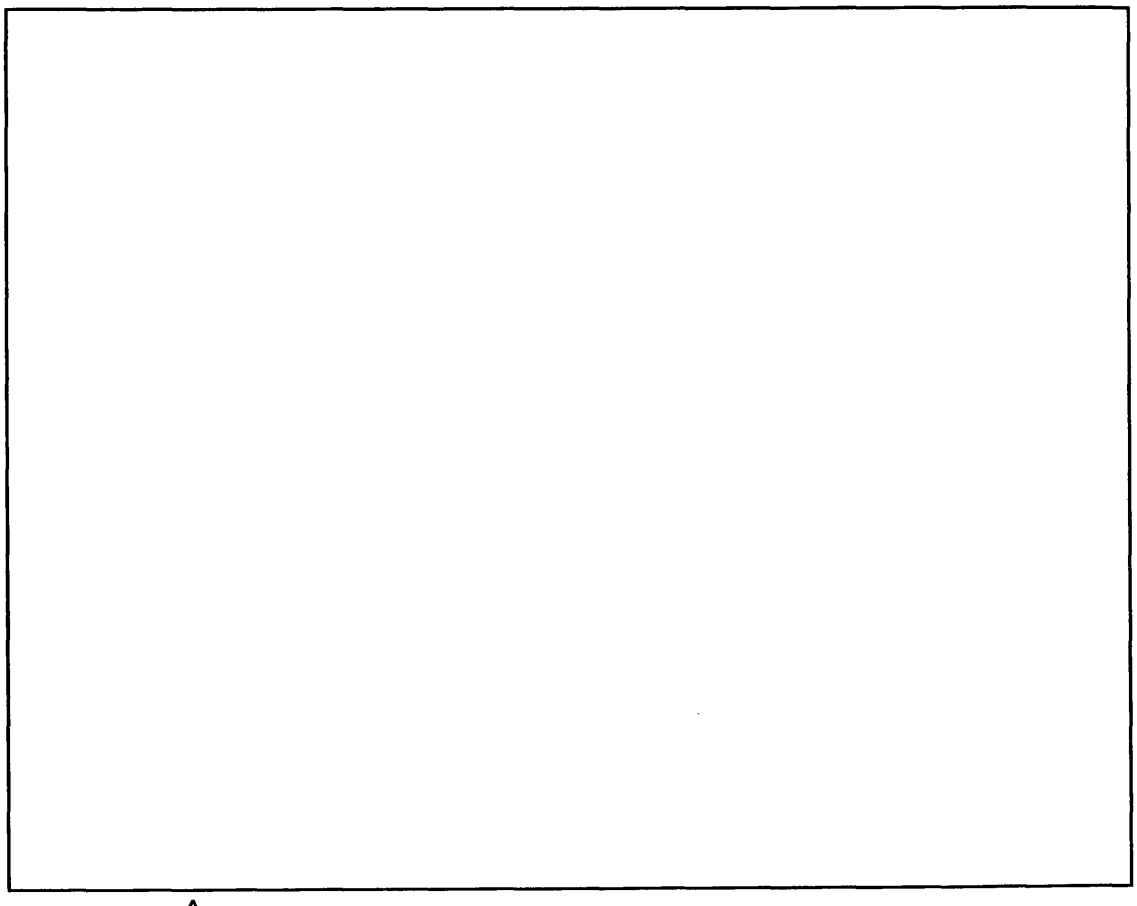
Reference Gender and Development Institute, undated, op cit.

APPENDIX II

Household Survey Questionnaire No.....
Household Number.....

I. Household Characteristics

1.1. Name of the respondent
1.2. Name of the household head
1.3. Sources of the household income
1.4. If the respondent is not the household head, she is ..... of the household head.
A family tree



(○ Man, △ Woman, — Non-resident)

1.5. Type of household

1.6. The household has been in the village for _____ years.

II. Household History of Occupations

2.1. Has the household owned rubber plot(s) ?

__ Yes __ No

(If yes) _____ rai, for _____ years

If the household members work for rubber-sheet processing, ask more detail)

2.2. Has the household grown rice ?

__ Yes __ No

(If yes) _____ rai, for _____ years

If the household did in the past, ask why gave up.

III. Household Asset

3.1. Land

Does the household have land holding ? Yes No

No.	Type	Utilisation	Size	Ownership	Acquisition

Type of land 1 Rubber plot 2 Rice field
3 Betel-nut and coconut plot 4 Residency
5 Fruit orchard 6 Vegetable plot
7 Other _____

Utilisation 1 Production for cash 2 Subsistence
3 Rent-out 4 Mortgage-out
5 Share with relatives 6 Vacant
7 Other _____

3.2. Other assets

1___ Radio
2___ Bicycle ___
3___ Gas stove
4___ Television
5___ Refrigerator
6___ Motorcycle ___
7___ Pick-up ___

3.3. Housing

___ Shelter
___ One-storey wooden house with zinc roof
___ One-storey wooden house with tile roof
___ Concrete building

APPENDIX III

Asset point

Asset	Point
Radio	1
Bicycle	1
Gas stove	1
Black and white television	1
Colour television	2
Refrigerator	2
Motorcycle	4
Pick-up car	10
Housing	
- Shelter	1
- One-storey house	2
- Two-storey house	3
- Concrete house	4

THAI WORDS USED

Amphoe	District
Aw baw taw	Subdistrict Administrative Organisation
Aw saw maw	Village Public Health Volunteer
Baht	Thai currency, one Pound was approximately equivalent to 60 Baht in 1999.
Bunkun	Favour, kindness, good term, service which one owes to the other.
Duen sib	The Southern Buddhist religious ceremony in the tenth lunar month to make merit for ancestors.
Kamnan	Subdistrict Chief
Khrob-hkrua	Family
Khrua	Kitchen
Khrua-ruen	Household
Kinlao	Drinking alcohol
Kloom aw saw maw	Village Public Health Volunteer Group
Kloom maeban	Village Housewives' Group
Kloom Omsub	Village Savings Group
Kloom Sodtree (Aa-saa Phattanaa)	Women Volunteers' Development Group
Len share	To participate in Village Rotating Saving Credit Group
Muban	Village
Nai	Term which villagers use to call government officials, particularly police.
Nai Amphoe	District Chief
Pattana/Phattanaa	Development
Phuchuay Phuyaiban	Village Head Assistant
Phuyaiban	Village Head
Rai	Unit of land measurement officially used in Thailand., 1 rai is approximately 0.16 hectare.
Ram Klongyaaw	To perform a kind of folkdance
Sataw	Parkia Speciosa, a Southern wild tree with edible seeds.
Share	Village Rotating Saving Credit Group

Suk	Ripen (a qualification for a man who has already ordained).
Tambon	Subdistrict

ACRONYM

AFTA	Asian Free Trade Areas
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BAAC	Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperation
CVPHS	Centre for Village Public Health Volunteers
DTEC	Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation
EPZS	Export Processing Zones
GDP	Gross Development Production
GNP	Gross National Production
IMT-GT	Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle
NCWA	National Commission on Women's Affairs
NESDB	National Economic and Social Development Board
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
NRIE	Northern Regional Industrial Estate
ORRAF	Organisation for Rubber Replanting Fund
SAO	Subdistrict Administrative Organisation
UN	United Nations
WID	Women in Development

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